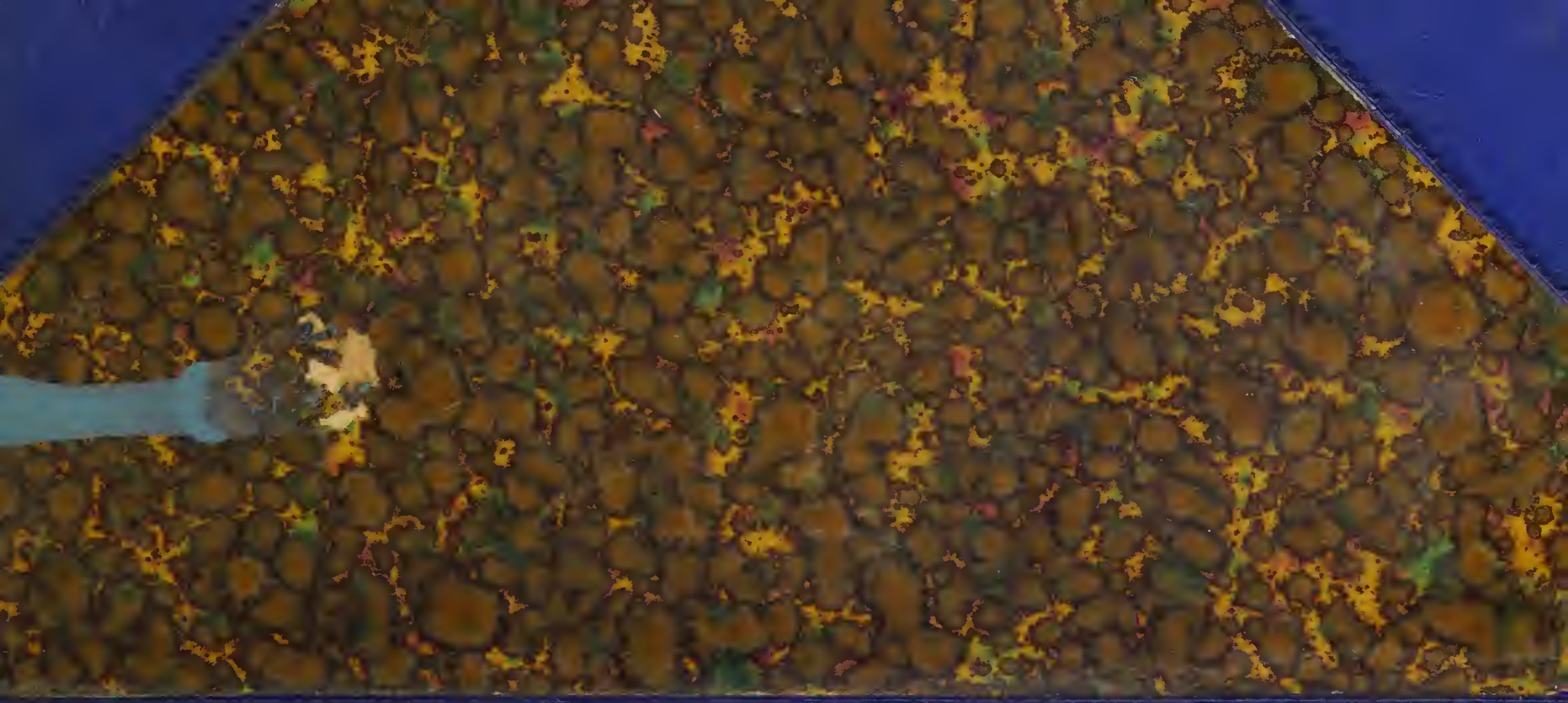

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"I have set
My foot upon the ploughshare—
I will pass the fiery ordeal."

THE LADY OF LYONS.

Lillie Langtry.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE," BY MESSRS. WINDOW AND GROVE, 63A BAKER STREET, W.

# THE THEATRE.

## A Monthly Review

OF

## THE DRAMA, MUSIC, AND THE FINE ARTS.

EDITED BY

CLEMENT SCOTT.

NEW SERIES.

VOL. V. JANUARY TO JUNE, 1885.

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## LIST OF PORTRAITS.


Mrs. Langtry as Pauline.

Miss Jessie Bond in "The Sorcerer."

Miss Calhoun in "Diplomacy."

Miss Ada Cavendish in "In His Power."

Miss Kate Phillips in "Open House."

Miss Tilbury in "Ruth's Romance."

Miss Maude Millett in "The Private Secretary."

Messrs. W. J. Hill and W. S. Penley in "The Private Secretary."

Mr. Thomas Thorne in "Saints and Sinners."

Mr. George Alexander as Bassanio.

Mr. Terriss as Romeo.

Mr. George Grossmith in "The Mikado."

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"He, that hath the steerage of my course,
Direct my sail."

ROMEO AND JULIET.

William Terriss

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE," BY BARRAUD,
263 OXFORD STREET, W.

# THE THEATRE.

## The Founder of a Paris Theatre.

PLANCHER VALCOUR.

By Charles Hervey.

THOSE who remember the old Boulevard du Temple, with its row of half-a-dozen theatres extending almost uninterruptedly in line from the Théâtre Historique to the Cirque Napoléon, may perhaps still bear in mind one of the smallest of these Thespian temples, called the Délassements Comiques, or, more briefly and familiarly, Délass. Com., the staple attractions of which were light vaudevilles of flimsy texture, varied towards December by an annual "revue" commemorating the literary and dramatic novelties of the year. This little theatre, the third of its name, destined to be swept away by the reforming ukase of the pitiless Hausmann, stood on or immediately adjoining the site of its predecessors; and it is to the first of these, or more correctly speaking to its founder, that I purpose devoting the present paper.

On the high road between Caen and Rouen stands, or at any rate stood towards the middle of the last century, a village of the ordinary Norman type, consisting of a long, straggling, and unevenly paved street, at the entrance of which, on a fine summer morning of the year 1767, a young pedestrian wayfarer might have been discovered diligently perusing a handbill affixed to a barn-door, and containing the following announcement:—"By permission of the authorities, the great company of strolling comedians will give this evening a representation of the 'Martyrdom of St. Genest,' the masterpiece of the celebrated Rotrou, as performed by them with unexampled success in every town, bourg, and village throughout the kingdom of France."

Judging from the interest and astonishment with which the youthful stranger read and gloated over the foregoing seductive programme, it was easy to divine that the theatre, with all its pomps and vanities, was to him a thing as yet unknown; while, from the mechanical insertion of his fingers into the pocket where his scanty store of cash was deposited, it was equally clear that he felt more than half-inclined to profit by the opportunity afforded him of satisfying his very legitimate curiosity.

How he came there is soon told. Entrusted in his sixteenth year, doubtless by his parents, although who they were is not recorded, to the care of a religious society entitled the Brethren of Christian Doctrine, for the completion of his education, Pierre Plancher, a native of Caen, had secretly given his instructors the slip, and with eighteen francs stowed away in his doublet set out to seek his fortune in the world, his first halt being in the locality honoured by the presence of the "great company," destined, as it turned out, materially to influence his future life. After inspecting the handbill until he knew it by heart, he inquired of a passing inhabitant in what part of the village the comedians had taken up their quarters, and was directed to an inn bearing the name of the White Cross, at the door of which, as luck would have it, the representative of St. Genest happened to be standing. The latter, possibly scenting an addition to the audience in the person of the new-comer, saluted him with dignified courtesy; and on learning that he purposed attending the performance, graciously entered into conversation with him, and even deigned to accept the invitation to a slight collation which, in his anxiety to conciliate so distinguished a personage, the fugitive from the "grands chapeaux" considered himself bound to offer him. The appetizing odour of a cabbage soup flavoured with bacon speedily attracted to the festive board two other members of the company, the "heavy father" and the "leading lady," a lively damsel, whose bright eyes and merry sallies so enchanted the Amphitryon that at the conclusion of the repast, when his guests had retired to assume their stage garb, he had quite made up his mind that the only desirable profession for a youth of spirit was that of a comedian, and that of all the pretty girls in the world Mdlle. Madeleine was unquestionably the prettiest.

The locality prepared by the innkeeper for the evening's entertainment was a spacious barn, some ragged pieces of tapestry

representing a curtain at the back of the stage, which was lit by half-a-dozen candles fixed in lumps of clay; the orchestra consisted of a single fiddler, who, by way of prelude, regaled the spectators with the then popular air of "La Bourbonnaise" on a cracked violin. As for the performance of the tragedy, it was strictly in accordance with similar exhibitions of bombastic rhapsody with which those conversant with Scarron's "Roman comique" are already acquainted. Plancher, however, was in the seventh heaven, and resolved to prolong his stay at the inn rather than tear himself away from such agreeable companions, with whom he became every day more intimate; but he had reckoned without his host. Little by little the eighteen francs had disappeared, and with them the obsequious civility of the landlord, who, shrewdly surmising that his customer's finances were at too low an ebb to render his continued patronage profitable to the establishment, deemed it advisable to present his bill, amounting to fifty livres, and insisted—not over-politely—on immediate payment. Fortunately for Plancher, at this critical juncture the comedians interposed, and after a short consultation among themselves, offered to settle the debtor's account, on condition that he consented to join them in their wanderings, and undertake the parts of angels in the Mysteries and of Cupid in the mythological and pastoral pieces. Our hero, who desired nothing better, gladly agreed to the arrangement; and a few indispensable articles of costume having been provided for him from the common stock, left the village with his associates on the following morning at break of day, in order that their next halting-place might be reached before nightfall.

He had no sooner commenced his dramatic apprenticeship than he bethought himself of adopting, as a necessary preliminary, a name more in unison with the high-sounding appellations of his fellow-strollers than his own modest patronymic; and after hesitating between Floridor, St. Phar, Belval, and Valcour, selected the latter. Thus transformed, and naturally endowed with a fair share of good looks and a more than average amount of intelligence, the new recruit proved a valuable addition to the company; and wherever he went was unanimously pronounced to be the most charming Cupid on the theatrical circuit. For some months he conscientiously adhered to his compact, alternately figuring as an angel or as the god of love, until at

length, dissatisfied with the limited range of parts allotted him, he bade adieu, not without regret, to his old companions, and enlisted under the banner of a rival and more enterprising manager, on the express stipulation that the leading characters in comedy, and notably the "Valets" of Molière, should be exclusively his own. As Crispin, Gros-René, and Sganarelle his success was incontestable, and his name soon became as well known throughout the provinces of France as were those of his chief nomadic contemporaries, the future dramatists, Dumaniant and Patrat, and Collot d'Herbois, the latter destined to play a very different part in the coming Revolution. His popularity as an actor, however, failed to satisfy his ambition. While wandering from place to place, he employed his leisure hours in the composition of sundry madrigals and other light poetical trifles, until he had collected a sufficient number to form a volume ; when, with or without the consent of his impresario, he suddenly started for Paris, carrying with him his precious manuscript, and—happy privilege of youth—never for an instant doubting that the possession of such a talisman must infallibly prove a stepping-stone to celebrity.

Strange as it may appear to those practically acquainted with the disappointments usually experienced by literary neophytes, the young author—friendless and unknown as he was—succeeded in his first attempt in discovering precisely the Mecænas of whose aid he stood most in need. Chance led him to address himself to a bookseller at that moment in search of a novelty suited to the taste of the day, who, struck with the piquancy and gracefully turned couplets of "Le Petit Neveu de Boccace"—for such was the appropriately suggestive title of the proposed work—not only undertook to publish it with a prettily engraved frontispiece, but even pushed his liberality so far as to advance the writer a small sum on account of the possible profits, This unexpected windfall induced Plancher Valcour to abandon, at least for a time, the idea of resuming his theatrical career. The success of his first essay induced him to believe that fame and fortune were within his grasp ; and in order to secure them he installed himself cheaply in an attic, and, to use his own words, "courted the Muse" from morning to night. During an entire year he rarely mixed in society, his only intimate acquaintance being the septuagenarian La Place, the translator of "Tom Jones" and "Venice Pre-

served," who occupied a small apartment in the same house, and to whose indulgent criticism he submitted every fresh production of his pen. His new volume was approaching completion, and he sanguinely regarded its acceptance by the publisher as a matter of certainty; but to his surprise and mortification the offer was declined, his former patron alleging that, the market being already overstocked with works of a similar character, it would inevitably be a failure. With a philosophy which did him credit, Plancher Valcour quietly pocketed his manuscript, and after consulting his friend La Place, decided, as the best means of recruiting his finances, on once more shouldering his knapsack, and giving the provincials another taste of his quality as Crispin and Sganarelle.

This second professional tour lasted seven or eight years, in the course of which he conceived the practical idea of having two strings to his bow, and displaying the versatility of his talent both as actor and dramatist, disposing of his rapidly written productions to the highest bidder, and caring little whether they succeeded or not, provided they were paid for. To one manager he gave a lyrical drama called "Le Siége de Poitiers," to another the comedy of "Les Petites Affiches," while not a few of his lighter pieces—notably "A Bon Vin Point d'Enseigne"—found their way to the capital, and were hailed as welcome additions to the repertory of the "Variétés amusantes." When he had amassed a sufficient sum for the realization of a project he had long entertained, he returned to Paris, and immediately on his arrival solicited and obtained permission to erect a theatre on the Boulevard du Temple, to which he gave the name of Délassements Comiques—he himself appearing before the public in the threefold capacity of manager, author, and actor. The success of the new venture was prodigious; the novelty of the spectacle—including comic opera, pantomime, and even ballet—a combination not hitherto attempted—proved so attractive that the directors of the privileged theatres, afraid lest their own receipts might be endangered by the competition, petitioned the Lieutenant of Police to issue an injunction whereby the performances of the Délassements Comiques were only allowed to continue on condition that a gauze-curtain should be suspended between the audience and the stage. The authorities, however, had not counted on the Revolution. Immediately after the taking of the Bastille,

Plancher Valcour himself tore away the obnoxious gauze, amid enthusiastic cries from all parts of the house of "Vive la liberté!"

The original building having been previously destroyed by fire, and a new one constructed on its site at a considerable cost, the speculating manager found it difficult under the changed régime to carry on his enterprise with a profitable result; he therefore surrendered the proprietorship in 1792 to other hands, and devoted himself exclusively to the production of ultra-revolutionary pieces, contributing them alternately to the Théâtre Molière and the Théâtre de la Cité. In accordance with the prevalent fashion of the time, he was no longer Plancher, but Aristide Valcour, and out-Heroded Herod in his advocacy of Jacobine principles and universal Republicanism; in what he termed his "sans-culottides" he waged a pitiless war against the moderate party, extolled Marat to the skies, and thus, as one of his biographers pithily remarks, "kept his head on his shoulders."

One day, after a good many years had elapsed since their last meeting, he came across his old acquaintance, La Place, whose memory age and infirmities had so grievously impaired that he entirely failed to recognize his former neighbour in the tricolour-scarved patriot of 1793; the literary veteran was then fast approaching his end, and such is the force of habit that his death was eventually caused by his being forced, owing to the sale of the house by its proprietor, to quit the lodging occupied by him for nearly half-a-century.

At the conclusion of the Reign of Terror, the Government, by way of recompensing the citizen Aristide for the ardour manifested by him in the revolutionary cause, conferred on him the singularly inappropriate office of "juge de paix" in the Faubourg St.-Martin district, a post in every respect unsuited to him. Shortly after his nomination, he gratified his love of theatrical display by reciting in public a poem of his composition in praise of the Republic, and made himself so generally ridiculous that his dismissal became a matter of necessity, and a more competent substitute was appointed in his stead. He then returned to the stage, and having satisfied his rancour by burlesquing, whenever an opportunity offered, the authorities, and particularly his late colleagues, the magistrates, gradually subsided into a representative of the "heavy fathers," in which capacity we find him at the Théâtre de

l'Impératrice (now Odéon) in 1807-8. Meanwhile, he continued to inundate the minor theatres with a constant succession of melodramas, several of which, especially the "Forêt bleue" and "L'Homme invisible," were fairly popular. He also edited a compilation in twenty volumes of "Celebrated Trials," assuming the title of "advocate," a profession which he assuredly never had either time or inclination to study.

Those who knew him personally describe him as a pleasant and jovial boon-companion, full of anecdote, and fond of recounting the adventures of his youthful days ; few excelled him in the art of improvising a lively couplet, one of the best known being "La Mère Picard," a stanza of which may be given as a specimen of his style :—

Mère Picard, dit-on, dans son jeune âge,
Fut la Vénus, la perle du quartier ;
Joli minois, appétissant corsage,
Dieu ! quel trésor pour un cabaretier !
Les ris, les jeux volaient sur ses traces,
Et constamment suivaient son étendard ;
Mais plus de jeux, de ris ni de grâces,
Ils sont couchés chez la mère Picard.

His latter years were passed in retirement at Belleville, where he died on February 28, 1815. The manuscripts of two or three novels having been discovered among his papers, they were published after his death : the best of them, "Colin Maillard," may almost be called an autobiography, relating the principal episodes of his early life, interspersed with sensational incidents and hair-breadth escapes, and flavoured with a certain broad humour not unlike that of Pigault-Lebrun. As far as I have been able to ascertain, there exists no portrait, either engraved or otherwise, of this singular Bohemian of the eighteenth century ; of the thirty-eight dramatic pieces produced by him, only seventeen were printed, and not one has kept the stage. His earliest work, however, "Le Petit Neveu de Boccace," may still occasionally be met with in booksellers' catalogues, the last surviving record of as curious a type as any to be found in the literary history of the time of Plancher Valcour, the original founder of the Délass. Com.

# Different Views.

A CHRISTMAS DUET.

BY J. ASHBY-STERRY.

I.

OH! Christmas comes but once a year!
(*And even that is once too many;*)
Hurrah for all its right good cheer!
(*I wish I had my share of any!*)
What flavour of the good old times!
(*What hopeless and egregious folly!*)
What evergreens and merry chimes!
(*What prickles ever lurk in holly!*)

II.

Indeed it is a merry time;
(*But, oh! those countless Christmas numbers!*)
For now we see the pantomime,
(*And now the waits disturb our slumbers.*)
We've kisses 'neath the mistletoe—
(*I hate such rough, unseemly capers!*)
And hearty welcomes, frost and snow;
(*Yes, in the illustrated papers.*)

III.

Around the groaning Christmas board,
(*Which never equals expectations,*)
Where old and young are in accord—
(*I hate the most of my relations!*)
I view the turkey with delight,
(*A tough old bird beyond all question!*)
The blazing pudding—what a sight!
('*Tis concentrated indigestion!*)

IV.

Laugh on, ye merry girls and boys!
(*Each year the Christmas boxes strengthen,*)
Each year brings with it countless joys;
(*The Christmas bills each year they lengthen.*)
To all we pledge the brimming glass!
(*What days of gorging and unreason!*)
Too quick such merry moments pass—
(*Why can't we skip the "festive season?"*)

# Theatrical Recollections of Mr. Edmund Yates.

By Godfrey Turner.

FOR myself, and I may well suppose for many who read this magazine, the most interesting parts of Mr. Edmund Yates's "Recollections and Experiences" (2 vols.: Bentley & Son) are those which relate to the stage. His memories of the old Adelphi Theatre especially delight me, finding, as they do, a sympathetic response in my own, which go back, however, six years beyond those of my friend. He cannot remember, as I do, the original cast of "The Wreck Ashore"; and he can have but very faint impressions, from actual experience, of his father's dramatic capacity. Had Frederick Yates not been ever ready and willing to "go on" in anything, had he not sacrificed himself as often as he did to "save the piece," he would hardly have been to the last the consummate master of character he always showed himself. As it was, he never sank into the selfish sameness that has spoilt many an actor. I was between five and six years old when I sat in a side-box of the little theatre and saw Yates, it must have been, for the first time. It was in a piece entitled "The Black Vulture, or the Wheel of Death." They called it a "burletta." They called "The Wreck Ashore" a "burletta" too. In fact, this was the old generic name, at the Adelphi, for all the spectacular and sensational productions. Though "the gentleman who had an exclamation for his Christian name," O. Smith to wit, played the part named the Black Vulture—or title-rôle, as we now say—it is the voice of Yates, and of Yates alone, in a part called Octolar, that I distinctly recall. Of the piece itself, though Buckstone, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and, I think, the charming Miss M. Glover, played in it, I remember nothing except a gulf of red fire at the end, which frightened me not a little, and, I dare say, lit up a pale scared little face. "The Wreck Ashore" was played about the same time, or shortly afterwards. I think it was born

a year before the author of these two highly entertaining volumes of "Recollections and Experiences"—that is, in 1830—and I saw it certainly within that year or the next, with all the characters sustained as on the first night. Mr. John Reeve, who was not a fastidious comedian, made me laugh uproariously. The author of the piece, a young country actor named John Baldwin Buckstone, was second low comedian, playing up to Reeve, as Munyard, years afterwards, played up to Wright on the same stage. Mrs. Yates and Mrs. Fitzwilliam, in the lonely cottage scene, with the dying smuggler, Grampus, are a living picture of natural emotion I can always conjure before me. Yates played Miles Bertram, one of his dare-devil parts, with a sinister gallantry, and softened its truculence by a pathetic death-scene.

Mr. Edmund Yates has spoken with filial pride and affection of his mother's love-compelling qualities. To the sweetness of her face and voice many have borne eloquent witness. When the pretty drama, "Victorine," came out at the Adelphi, within a few months of "The Wreck Ashore," Leigh Hunt wrote, in feeling with every heart capable of being stirred by true sentiment, "Let all go and see this piece, and, if they wish to be particularly virtuous, let them fall in love with Mrs. Yates in the last scene." The acting of these dramas is a lost art. But of that let us say no more now. Charles Dickens admired Mrs. Yates as much as, or more than, did Leigh Hunt—as much as, or more than, he admired any one for good acting. "To the last," said he, in a letter to her son, after her death in 1860, "I never could hear her voice without emotion. I think of her as a beautiful part of my own youth; and the dream that we are all dreaming seems to darken."

Those were not the days when "originality" had come to be in such fretful and feverish request, and to be quarrelled about as it now is. All the originality there was in Mr. Buckstone's dramas was of the true unconscious kind—the only real kind of originality, after all. Who was the greatest plagiarist, pray, of the most truly original epoch, the Elizabethan? Was it any one of the men of the age of Shakespeare—those who took the plots that were handiest? Was it Shakespeare himself, he who picked his history from Plutarch or Hollinshed, and his romance from Italian novels? No; it was the one particular inventor of the plots of his own comedies, the learned Ben Jonson, who, with all his love of beauty, with all his wit, fancy, and scholarship, seems

ever conscious of his powers, ever showing off himself as well as his subject; ever fussy, pedantic, and irritable about his endless pretensions and his towering claims to praise. How many men, who now compare with Ben Jonson as mole-hills with Mount Everest, make even more noise about their originality, naïvely supposing this to mean novelty, and nothing beyond! Mr. Buckstone's dramas, on the other hand, were, in the right sense, original, without being, as regards their plots, entirely new. The plot is the most inconsiderable part of a drama till genius has touched it, or till something less than genius has made it presentable; and whether it be new, or as old as the farrago of fables pitched together at the opening of Thackeray's novel "The Newcomes," is a question of no moment as affecting Thackeray's or Tomkins's *originality;* as any one who reads that satirical introduction with the merest glimmer of understanding may begin to suppose. Go boldly to your Æsop, O dramatist, for ideas, and be thankful for what you get.

From Mr. Yates's Adelphi-records it appears that the gains of playwrights, fifty years ago, were considerably less than those, say, of railway contractors at the present time, and not very much greater than the receipts of authors like Carlyle. We have, it seems, changed all that. Here is an extract from one of Buckstone's business-letters to Frederick Yates, some time in the 30's:

As we have had no decided arrangement about "The Rake," and as whatever terms we can agree upon about that piece will influence my future doings, I wish to state a few matters for you to think about: £50 was mentioned by you for it, and afterwards an additional £10 for securing the acting copyright in the provinces for twelve months. I was allowed £60 for "Henriette," and really, with the prices I can now command, I am working at a very low rate in letting you have three-act dramas at that sum. For a successful three-act play you ought, I think, to afford me £70, such sum securing to you the sole acting right for ever in London, and to you alone for one year, or, say, to the 1st October, following its production.

Afterwards, at his increased rates, Buckstone received £70 for a three-act drama, and £10 for the provincial rights for twelve months. I quote again, this time the words being Mr. Edmund Yates's own:

Now I have been furnished by a worthy friend of mine, a writer of melodrama of the present day, whose name, for obvious reasons, I shall not mention, with a return of the fees which he has received for one piece alone, which, at the time of writing, are within £150 of a total of *ten thousand pounds*, and which are still rolling in at the rate of £100 a week! In this return, America, really

unknown in earlier days as a money-producer for the English dramatist, figures for £800 more than London; the provinces, valued by Buckstone at a £10 note, yield nearly £3,000; while Australia, at that time chiefly known as a receptacle for convicts, yields more than double the amount originally paid by my father for the whole acting copyright.

True, Buckstone's "burlettas" may have been less severely original than the dramatic productions of more modern authors, who would almost persuade us to believe that they have never read anything but their own lucubrations. Buckstone, as an actor, vanished from the Adelphi when the reign of Yates ended —sooner, I think, for I don't remember him there after the time of Jack Reeve, or in the days when Yates was playing Mantalini, Fagin, and Quilp. Wright, Forman (soon to give place to Paul Bedford), Munyard, a pantomimist named Wieland, who was a good low comedian besides, and two or three others, made up what is called the low comedy, in succession to Reeve and Buckstone. The first of these—Wright—I had seen at the Lymington Theatre, in the New Forest, before he came to London. I don't remember whether or not he played in a locally coloured drama, written by a boyish companion of mine, called "Hurst Castle, or the Monk of Beaulieu"—act-drop and scenery also painted by one of my schoolfellows—but I know that he, Wright, appeared in the screaming farce which followed it. Often did I think of his country engagement, which dated about the year 1840, when I saw him afterwards in other screaming farces at the old Adelphi. Associated with Wright from this comedians' earliest Adelphi days was an actor who was no actor, but was —Paul Bedford. He always called Wright "Guv'nor," and he always called Toole "Guv'nor" when the happily living and "like-to-live" embodiment of pure fun took on his broadly comic and comically broad shoulders the farcical fortunes of the Adelphi. The only pathetic thing I remember of Paul Bedford was a morning at Bow Street, when one of the very many dissipated hangers-on of Bohemia's outskirts appeared on the charge of forging Paul's name to a note-of-hand. "Do you know the prisoner?" asked Mr. Henry, afterwards Sir Thomas. "I'm extremely sorry," says the witness Paul, looking very rueful, "to say in this place, and with him standing *there*, that I've known him ever since he was a little Bo-ho-ho-ho-hoy." From involuntary habit, mingled with an honourable emotion, Mr. Bedford's pronunciation of the word "boy" was rolled off in the famous "Green Bushes" manner;

and, as a piece of genuine unacted Low-Tragedy, the effect was deeply impressive. Mr. Yates exactly gauges Mr. Paul Bedford's comic calibre when he says:

> Constantly associated with him (Wright) on the stage, half feeder, half butt was Mr. Paul Bedford, always in my time a big, jovial, red-faced, mellow-voiced, brainless comedian, but whom my mother remembered as a good-looking young man—a sweet tenor singer. Paul Bedford's size and rotundity, his odd utterance of slang saying, his stolid imperviousness to the impertinence with which in the due course of all the dramas he was duly assailed by Wright, made him a favourite with the Adelphi public, and gave him a *raison d'être*. Had he lived later he would have been well placed in a music-hall, on the platform, or in the chair. He had not the slightest claim to be considered an actor, played every part in exactly the same fashion, had not the faintest notion of impersonation, and was fundamentally stupid and ignorant. But in his earlier days he sang "Jolly Nose," and in later years he said, "I believe you, my boy!" and these accomplishments, with his reputed jollity, his social reputation for full-flavoured anecdotes, and his position as Wright's professional butt, carried him successfully through a long life.

There is not, I will take upon myself to say, a needlessly hard word in the foregoing, nor one that the lamented Mr. Bedford himself would have felt severely, had he been alive to read it. In this paper I have done Mr. Yates an injustice by paying him a compliment. I have shown how much he interests me by being myself garrulous over his younger gossiping. It is considered a dangerous thing, and one rigorously denied me in daily practice, to promise "more anon"; but I think it safe to say that I have not done with my friend's theatrical reminiscences, and that I shall return to them in my own way next month.

ANCIENT PRICES OF ADMISSION TO THEATRES.—The cost of admission to the theatres in the days of Queen Elizabeth was very moderate. "Let me never live to look so high as the twopenny room (boxes) again," says Ben Jonson in the Prologue to "Every Man out of His Humour," acted for the first time at the Globe, on the Bankside, 1599. The price of the best room or boxes was one shilling; of the lower places twopence, and in some places one penny. The twopenny, mentioned by Jonson, was the gallery. Decker says, "Pay your twopence to a player, and you may sit in the gallery." This place seems to have been very discreditable, for it is commonly described as the resort of pickpockets and other bad characters in "Every Man out of his Humour." The lords' room over the stage (this answered to the present stage-boxes), the price to them—one shilling. Thus Decker, in his "Guls' Hornbook" (1609), tells us, "At a new play, you take up the twelvepenny room, next the stage. It will give you consequence, because the lords and you may seem to be hail-fellow, well met."

# To a Beautiful Woman.

". . . . sweetest eyes were ever seen."—CAMOENS.

LONG ago a poet dreamed you,
Drew your picture line by line,
Fair and gracious as beseemed you,
Flooded in the bright sunshine,
That your beauty, halo-wise,
Shed around in golden sheen ;
Sang the magic of your eyes,
" Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

Did the poet in his dreaming,
Conjure up, as I do now,
Tawny hair, its ripples gleaming
On the smooth and open brow ?
Curving mouth with dimples prest
Set in gentleness serene,
Hands, whose touch brought sense of rest,
" Sweetest eyes were ever seen ? "

Did the singer . . . . Useless queries !
Had he never seen your face,
With its charm that never wearies,
And its tender, old-world grace,
He had never so enshrined
In such happy phrase, I ween,
Th' queenliest of womankind,
" Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

So, though loving you so purely,
Gentler words I will not seek,
Knowing that their echo surely
Bears the thought I cannot speak.
Praying only that the eyes
That so well-beloved have been,
Still will shine in Paradise,
" Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

M. E. W

# The Question of the Hour.

AN ANSWER TO AN ESSAY.

AN essay on "Actors" has lately appeared in an interesting book entitled "Obiter Dicta." The author seeks to prove two things: firstly, that the world has been and is right in regarding the profession of acting with prejudice and disesteem; secondly, that the life of an actor is an unworthy one, and that it is degrading to make the amusement of others the occupation of a life. We challenge these conclusions. Many of the statements which form the strength of the argument can be disproved, and those arguments which are undeniable are not convincing. The acknowledged disadvantages of an actor's life are counterbalanced, or at least mitigated, by advantages: and many of his troubles are those inseparable from every artist's career. To be a great actor, according to this writer, is

> To have the best parts in the best plays; to be the central figure of every group; to feel that attention is arrested the moment you come on the stage; and (more exquisite satisfaction still) to be aware that it is relaxed when you go off; to have silence secured for your smallest utterances.

To concentrate all attention on his work is an ambition common to all artists. No painter wishes the frame to be noticed when the picture is criticized; no poet wishes the binding to be admired when the poem is read. Personal vanity is a matter of individual feeling in the dramatic as in other professions: and actors are continually content to disguise themselves into ugliness for the sake of their parts. Every profession tends to emphasize certain bad qualities as well as good ones: a magistrate is apt to be more dogmatic, a literary man more pedantic, a painter more affected, and an actor more vain than ordinary do-nothing mortals.

"Is it pleasanter to represent greatness or to be great?" asks our author. *Greatly to represent greatness is to be great.* The writer presently states that no man intellectually great *would* be an actor; so the question resolves itself into this: "Whether it is pleasanter to be a great actor than not to be great at all?"

The word greatness is often used in a double sense, and it is a popular fallacy that moral and intellectual qualities imply one another. The absolute perfection of greatness implies goodness; but virtue is not the necessary or even natural concomitant of intellect, for intellect implies an understanding, and to a certain extent a sympathy, with all men's motives and actions, good and bad. Bacon was the "meanest of mankind," Julius Cæsar amongst the least moral; and in decrying actors it must be remembered that moral qualifications are not necessary in other professions, and that the contrast between the successful villain and unsuccessful hero may be witnessed in all the walks of life. Heroes in real life often remain undiscovered, it is true, for the world at large can only admire the virtues that are publicly made known.

Actors are unfavourably contrasted with the men of action whom they represent. At one time statesmanship involved corruption as certainly as acting implies vulgarity now. Is it inherent in the nature of acting that it should be vulgar? No more than it was inherent in statesmanship that it should be corrupt, although in Walpole's time "every man had his price." "The world has despised the actor's art." True; and formerly the world condemned the lending of money. Now a Rothschild adorns a Court.

Followers of many professions were treated contemptuously. Voltaire was whipped by a rich man's order. Molière had his face battered by the prototype of Tartuffe. Lemprière's story about Laberius is quoted. Cæsar, to humble Laberius, who had offended him, condemned the author to act in one of his own plays. There is no doubt that in his time actors were despised; but at a later period shows of all kinds were held in high esteem, and a Roman emperor thought it no shame to appear in the arena as a gladiator. In more modern times Madame de Maintenon allowed the young ladies at St. Cyr to act in a stage-play, showing that not play-acting, but its associations, were objected to.

The disadvantage of the ephemeral nature of the actor's art is shared by singers and all musicians, and by all those popular preachers, demagogues, and barristers whose success depends on their manner of stating old truths, and not their ingenuity in disguising them as new ones. In the latter case they retain hold as literary men. All these find compensation in a delight peculiar to

their professions: they not only arouse emotions, but they witness and share them, and they at once see the result of their best work.

The advantage of mere perpetuity is apt to be overrated. Years and centuries appear alike as we look back to the dim horizon of time; and seen from the distance of long ages, a lifetime of success and a century of remembrance are the same.

All works of art (except the masterpieces of literary and musical composition) are destined to disappear in the course of time. The depth of the influence they exert, the numbers who come under it, are of more importance than the mere mathematical consideration of the number of years over which the influence extends.

The writer of this essay points out that Chippendale is more potent nowadays than Garrick. Boswell is quoted by him as "saving Garrick from oblivion." There is such a thing as an immortality of contempt, and indeed Macaulay declares that Boswell has achieved "fame that marvellously resembles infamy." Even those who attach most value to immortality would, we think, prefer to be a Rachel, and die, if need be, forgotten, than a Chippendale, to live for centuries a remembered upholsterer. And the immortality of loving remembrance attends on all great actors.

Joan of Arc left no material record of her life's work; Philip Sydney's sonnets are known only to the reading few; but the remembrance of the woman who risked life and honour for her country, of the man who was the most gentle and courteous of all gentlemen and courtiers, and the remembrance of the actor who held an audience spellbound by his look, will live till the times they lived in are forgotten.

The art of mimicry is cited as objectionable. But men are continually depicting emotions they do not feel; the author who creates an Iago does so; the barrister who describes the sufferings of his clients does so. It is true that the actor disguises his personality behind his work; but it must be borne in mind that all artists seek to do that. He disguises his person; and so do the members of other professions.

Does our author extend his contemptuous pity to the lawyers forced to wear wigs, the soldiers forced to shave, the gentlemen condemned to wear breeches when they appear in State in the

Royal Presence? The only motive with these is prejudice. The verdict would be as just if the judge donned no false hair: the loyalty as sincere if the courtiers wore trousers: whereas in acting there is a good reason for change of costume. It aids dramatic interpretation. In Garrick's time no disguise was worn. He played Shylock in a bag-wig. It is in deference to the awakening sense of the Becoming and Beautiful that actors are studying costume, and combining the painter's and antiquarian's art with their own.

To set yourself to amuse the public is to degrade yourself.

All professions and trades minister to the natural wants of man. Is the profession of the barrister (which only exists by the iniquities of society), that of the soldier (which only exists by the iniquities of States), finer and nobler than the actor's, which exists in order to gratify in an innocent and beautiful way man's desire for excitement and amusement?

Actors share the "degradation and indignity" of amusing the public with all novelists, play-writers, and painters. Is it not a degradation to write plays which it is a degradation to others to act? If actors be condemned, so must all those be condemned who have witnessed and applauded the debasement of their fellow-creatures. As to the remark that authors would blush to appear in the costume and character of one of their own dramatic creations, we do not dispute the authority of Lemprière that this was the case in the time of Laberius; but we seriously doubt whether Byron, Boucicault, Gilbert, Pinero, Rose, and the many others who in modern days have appeared in their own successful comedies, were ashamed of doing so:—

Alas! 'tis true I have gone here and there
And made myself a motley to the view,

says Shakespeare in the 110th sonnet. No doubt the man who could write "Hamlet" would despise himself for acting the part of the Ghost; but this does not prove that the man who cannot write "Hamlet," and who can act the part of the Ghost, demeans himself by doing so. The writer nearest akin to Shakespeare questions whether he "ever unlocked his heart with a sonnet-key":

Did Shakespeare?
If so, the less Shakespeare he!

Poets are apt to stamp their fleeting feelings with the impression of enduring truth.

Many actors love their profession : those who most abuse it are often the slowest to leave the boards. Acting is hereditary in many families ; and it is clear that the evils of a business to which many parents devote their children must be out-weighed by its advantages. Men are inclined to decry their own professions. The advantages are known to all the world, the disadvantages only to those who go behind the curtain. Thus Bolingbroke always ran down public life. Lord Shrewsbury declared he would rather his son were a hangman than a statesman. Salvini is quoted as having regretted that the sleep-walking scene was not given to Macbeth. It is intellectually conceivable that Macbeth should have been tormented by a nightmare of that sort ; and this only shows that Salvini, over-absorbed in his own part, did not heed the magnificent inspiration that represents the unflinching, self-controlled woman as suffering the same agony as the weaker man when her will cannot keep watch.

An actor certainly cares little for any character but his own when he loses himself in his part. It is deplorable we admit ; but it is the same in real life. Each man imagines himself the hero of the life-drama in which he is acting, and would fail to put the utmost energy of heart and soul into his work if it were not so. Artistically this may be a mistake ; but it is not a mistake when all artists are equally great, so that each part can be amplified to the utmost without detriment to the rest. A great actor is naturally tempted to over-emphasize his part when he feels that he alone makes the play live. This does not prove the stage unworthy, but only that there are not sufficient worthy actors on it.

"Actors have nothing to do with literature and criticism—that is my case."

That actors are rarely critics we admit. That is why critics exist. If artists absorbed all characteristics of perfection, the useful writers of such volumes as the one before us would be out of work. The critical faculty rarely attends men of genius. The step between the Sublime and the Ridiculous is a small one ; those who are ever on the look-out to avoid the Ridiculous rarely reach the Sublime.

A famous Roman declared that he made laws, he did not follow them. "My business is to create, not to criticize,"

George Eliot once remarked. The artist is the man who makes, the critic the man who takes to pieces and examines. Which profession is finer, more soul-inspiring, more worthy of honour and applause, we will not try to answer. As to actors having nothing to do with literature, that we deny. Our great dramatic authors would never have produced their immortal works had the dramatic and literary arts not been akin to one another.

The imperfection of all stage representations of classical parts results from the fact that no man has the genius for acting that Shakespeare had for writing. Shakespeare himself could not play the part of Hamlet; but he wrote the play that it might be acted. When the critic, speaking of Irving, says that he does not represent Shakespeare's Hamlet, he merely means that he does not represent the critic's notion of Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Every human being receives an individual impression of a work of art, and it is the privilege of the actor and of the critic to record their impressions for the benefit of the world at large. The public, accustomed to accept great works unthinkingly, is indebted to all actors, painters, and critics who conscientiously endeavour to interpret the masterpieces, for they shed a new light upon them, even if it be but a dim light.

It is not true that bad plays offer most scope to great actors; but it is true that there are very few good plays; and it is true that it is more essential that a play should be dramatically good than that it should be good as a literary work. Such plays as "Othello," "Romeo and Juliet," and the "Merchant of Venice," are perfect in both respects, and every prominent tragic actor has attempted the leading male part in all three.

Mr. Irving, in late years, has undertaken the following parts: Hamlet, Othello, Iago, Macbeth, Shylock, Romeo, Benedick, and Malvolio. Mr. Booth, the American tragedian, besides essaying many of these, has appeared in "King Lear."

The very greatness of Shakespeare's plays causes them to lack some desirable qualities: they lack novelty. The potent element of surprise (dear alike to novelist and play-writer) cannot exist in the works of an author whose every word is known by heart. We all know the story of the lady who complained that "Hamlet" was "nothing but quotations."

Every one has a preconceived opinion as to the way in which Shakespearian characters should be represented; and when the

actor fails to please him, declares (as does our author) that Shakespeare is not rendered as the poet himself intended. The multitude, moreover, only sympathize cordially with the scenes and passions of which they have some knowledge in ordinary life. Fairy plays such as "A Midsummer Night's Dream," tragedies such as "King Lear," fail to appeal to general sympathy, because they represent circumstances and emotions at once rare and not easily realized. One of the most marvellous plays in the English language, "The Cenci," cannot be performed because Shelley treats of a phase of life at once so uncommon and so terrible that people shrink from it in horror.

Theatrical managers are slow, it is true, to recognize merit in new plays. "Nothing succeeds like success" is a saying likely to be remembered by managers, for to them failure often implies bankruptcy, and they suffer the double loss of money and prestige when a "run" is overshort. It would be a matter for regret, a sign of decadence, if actors were content to appear only in old plays, every word of which has been repeated, discussed, and re-discussed in bygone ages. In Elizabethan times the cry was all for novelty and excitement. Men wanted to see their own ideas reflected on the stage: Shakespeare answered to the call. The cry again is heard. The present age has been accused of being a purely critical age; but it is more than this. There is a restless spirit of energy—a noble spirit of discontent abroad. The world is waiting to be wakened to new enthusiasm. Old and young—those who are fresh-hearted, those who are world weary—all are attracted by the stage. The stage is, we confess, crowded by vulgar, vain, vapid, even vicious people. There are fine plays to be acted, audiences to enjoy them, theatres in which to produce them. The question is: How can good and worthy actors be found and encouraged to persevere? Not by continuing to hold the actor's profession in disrepute; not by feebly condemning a calling that is universally enjoyed and applauded; but by boldly upholding its legitimate beauties, and by forcibly decrying all those who seek to lower it by their actions, their words, or their deeds.

# A German Court-Theatre.

By Wilhelm F. Brand.

MANY an Englishman, when visiting one of the better theatres in Germany, often wonders how such large establishments can be kept up by the comparatively small entrance-fees that are charged, not being aware that it is the King of the land, or the municipal authorities of the place, that pay half—and, indeed, generally the greater half—for his own as well as for the other seats in the house. For, abroad, well-conducted theatres and opera-houses are considered not only places of amusement, but also of culture and refinement—at any rate, the "Hof-Theater" and others that are kept up by some subvention. They all closely resemble each other in their working order. To obtain a knowledge of this, it would therefore suffice to look more closely into one of them. And, if for this purpose, I have chosen that of Hanover, it is not because it is our leading theatre, but because it is neither better nor worse than a good many others, and therefore *ab uno disce omnes.*

The Court Theatre of Hanover was in great flourish under the former kings of that country, who took a great personal interest in it; but when George V., in 1866, was driven away, its very existence became doubtful for a short period. However, Prussia happily learned in time that the keeping up of such an establishment would help to pacify the then rather turbulent spirits of the Hanoverians; and the King of Prussia, from his privy purse, granted some half a million of marks annually for its maintenance; acting at the same time in an equally generous as well as politic manner towards the Court-theatres of Cassel and Wiesbaden, which he had also deprived of their respective princely supporters. With the sum of £25,000 per annum in hand, apart from the receipts for the sale of seats, a manager can go a good long way, especially in Germany, where things are so cheap. The post of manager, or "Hof-Intendant," is as much one of honour as of importance, and is at this moment ably filled by Herr Bronsart von Schellendorf, the brother of the

present War Minister. As the social standing of the Intendant is very high, so is that of the artists—as far as their private life admits—a very good one, though of course it cannot be maintained that they are still more the spoiled children of society than their English colleagues seem to be at present.

Twenty-five thousand pounds is a pretty large sum for a manager to have in his hands, and yet, if one considers that he has to provide a different entertainment every night, one cannot help wondering how he can manage it. But that is what an audience in a town like Hanover requires, where a good many of the inhabitants visit the theatre very frequently, and where there is rarely another playhouse worth speaking of. As there is no change of houses there must be a change of the play; and the run of a piece for two or three nights consecutively would soon leave the house empty. Even the very form of entertainment must change continually. If there is a drama given one night, there is almost invariably an opera to be heard the next. Considering all that, the staff of artists the house possesses surely is not too large. There are sixteen solo-singers, forty-seven chorus-singers, and twenty ballet-dancers, apart from the pupils of the "Chorschule," as well as those of the "Ballet-schule." Then there are twenty-four actors, not counting the "supers," who also in the dramas are taken principally from the chorus-singers; and where their number does not suffice, soldiers are told off for the purpose, whilst in some other towns university students occasionally go in for that sort of fun. Then, considering that different scenery and dresses are required every night, the eighty-one scenic artists, scene-shifters, tailors, and workmen of all kinds that are regularly employed, can scarcely be supposed to produce such scenic effects as are to be witnessed at some of the large London theatres, which in this respect are altogether unrivalled in the world. The orchestra is composed of seventy-five performers. Counting, in addition to all these, fifteen box-keepers and twenty-eight different officials of all kinds, we find that the number of persons regularly employed by the theatre amounts to 306, apart from those supernumeraries mentioned above.

Another piece every night, of course, does not mean a new piece each time. A play may not be given two nights running; but, if successful, there is no reason why it should not be produced at intervals of a few weeks. Examining thus the répertoire

of the last year, there were performed 137 dramas and 123 operas during nine months, for there are three months' holidays during the summer; but only eighty-six different pieces were given; so that on an average every piece is performed about three times a year, forty-five pieces—or more than half—seeing the footlights only once during that year; one comedy, "Der neue Stifts-Arzt," scored the maximum of all representations, being performed ten times; whilst of operas, "Lohengrin" came first, with seven performances. In Berlin, where there are two different houses of the Royal Theatre—one for the drama, the other for the opera—in the former, "Die Rantzau" was played twenty-five times; whilst, in the latter, "Carmen"—the Emperor's favourite opera—was performed twenty times. It need scarcely be said that even the eighty-six different pieces performed during the nine months in Hanover were not all newly produced during that period, most of them belonging to the standing répertoire of the house year after year.

Nevertheless, a fair variety is offered, so that the tastes—at least the legitimate tastes!—of all may be satisfied to some extent. All poets, all countries, are represented as far as possible. Thus I have seen, for instance, Byron's "Manfred" performed in Hanover. What English manager would venture upon a similar undertaking, though the author was his countryman? But is it always the paying pieces only that deserve to be performed? Surely not. "Die Kunst soll nicht nach Brod gehen;" and a Court-theatre is supposed to be above such a question as "Does it pay?" It only has to ask, "What do I owe to the public? what to the poets? what to art in general?" and boldly face the recurrence of what I am credibly informed happened in Hanover not long ago, that the money taken at the doors one night amounted to the paltry sum of six shillings, apart, of course, from the regular subscriptions that are taken for nearly a quarter of the seats in the house. The ordinary price for a stall being about four shillings, and for an "Erster Rang" (or dress-circle) seat a trifle more, subscribers get a further reduction of some twenty-five per cent. So it happens that, even if all the seats of the house are sold out, the receipts only amount to £150 a night, and, on special nights, the prices being slightly raised, to £188 and £230 respectively. The average receipts for the whole period of nine months do not quite come up to

£25,000. Even taking into account the £25,000 granted by his Majesty, the expenses of the whole must therefore be under £50,000 a year, and the pay of the artist, accordingly.

An actor with £400 to £500 a year may well be content, and even for a singer to get more than £1,000 per annum is quite the exception. However, if their income is comparatively moderate, it is, on the other hand, as secure as the throne of the land; and, after a certain number of years, any one connected with the "Hof-Bühne"—be he an artist or a scene-shifter—is entitled to a pension. Besides, they have three months' holidays in the year, and during the other nine months their services are seldom required oftener than two evenings a week. So they have yet time for occasional "Gastspiele" at the theatres of other towns, just as Hanover itself frequently receives artists from them as "guests"—sometimes only for the sake of variety, but oftener with a view to an engagement. Whenever there is a place to be filled at the theatre, some candidates appear in a part or two, and, though the final engagement rests with the Intendant only, he is naturally glad to take the verdict of the public into account. For every style of character is represented by special actors. So the stereotype rôles of old men, for instance, are easily classified as "Heldenväter," "pères nobles," and "Komische Alten," just as there are, amongst lovers, the heroic lover, the drawing-room lover, &c.; but, as the line cannot always be distinctly drawn, of course one actor sometimes encroaches on the borders of the other. On the whole, they have to play whichever part they are told, provided it is in their line. And if the style of character they represent in one play is the leading part, and in another little more than that of a super, they have to submit to the latter with as good a grace as if it were the principal. Hence the good all-round performances one may witness at such a place.

The Court-theatre in Hanover, as may be supposed, is very vast, and an ornament to the town. Standing, as it does, in a large open space in the centre of the town, it is equally accessible from all parts. There being sometimes two or three different rehearsals of as many different plays at the same hour, and the ordinary practice of the chorus, and also of the ballet, going on as well, a good many large rooms are required apart from the stage and auditorium. In addition to them there are a large

"Concert-Saal," long rows of dressing-rooms, offices, &c., and commodious "foyers," where one may comfortably await one's carriage. For carriage-people, also, a fine, sheltered portico is erected. For them everything is made convenient; only—the carriages are wanting. Not that the good people of Hanover do not possess any, but, there being no distance to drive, no evening dress required, and the performance over by ten o'clock, comparatively very few people require a carriage. This early concluding of a performance, which generally begins about seven, suits almost everyone. For those who do not consider ten P.M. their hour for retiring-delight in taking a stroll through some concert-garden, or meeting their friends at their "Stamm-Kneipe," a good many of whom they are sure to have previously seen at the theatre, the central and nightly general meeting-place for all.

This system of a Royal subvention does not necessarily stifle private enterprise in such matters, especially in large towns, as a Court-theatre would never produce any operetta or farce—unless of the very first order—or spectacular and sensational plays, and the like. But, on the whole, the system is so much approved of in Germany that towns which are not blessed with a Royal theatre help themselves by creating a similar house with the assistance of municipal support. So towns like Frankfurt, Hamburg, Leipzig, &c., have their "Stadt-Theater" rivalling in excellence many a "Hof-Theater," the municipal authorities taking for their motto, as the splendid curtain of the Hanoverian Theatre has it:

"Didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores nec sinet esse feros."

TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.—Rousseau makes this distinction between tragedy and comedy. In comedy, the plot turns on marriage; in tragedy, it turns on murder. The whole intrigue, in the one and the other, turns on this grand event—will they marry? will they not?—will they murder, or not?—this is the first act. There will be a marriage—there will be no murder; this gives birth to the second act. A new mode of marrying and of murdering is prepared for the third act. A difficulty impedes the marriage or the murder, which the fourth act discusses. At last the marriage and the murder are effected for the benefit of the fifth act, and last.

# Mr. Irving's Second American Tour.

NEW YORK, *December* 6, 1884.

I HOPE no American will launch the thunders of excommunication if I maintain that New York is not an ideal place to live in. A stranger who wanted to be severe might say that the Empire City is a kind of reduced London, with very much of the charm of London left out. Without going so far, or adopting Mr. Ruskin's belief that New York ought to be destroyed, I must respectfully record my conviction that even the theory that beauty is in the eye and not in the object, will not make this city beautiful. I have tried hard by the light of the moon to discover the sublime and the picturesque in the elevated railroad. Undesirably comfortable is that piece of engineering. When you are whisked past second-floor windows in a spacious and almost luxurious car, you do not ponder very deeply on the inconvenience and irritation which your journey may cause to people who are engaged in sleep or contemplation in the neighbouring houses. But surveyed from the street below, the elevated railroad is a horror. Nor is it easy to reconcile the eye to the forest of telegraph-poles which fill the city. Yet you feel that your "personal pang" is not shared by the citizens who have cheerfully sacrificed the beautiful to the necessities of prompt and easy communication. Americans are a nervous people; but the roar of the trains through the streets and the plaintive scream of the telephone whistle do not agitate the community. In America, the telephone is a fearful and wonderful engine of torture. For a few cents you can torment the tympanum of your enemy for five or ten minutes, according to the measure of your malignity. But the climax of this terror has been attained by the Rev. Dr. Talmage. That worthy preacher proposes to reach by telephone the ears of such of his congregation as happen to be detained at home by indisposition. How many a man lying helpless will bless the excellent divine when withering denunciations of the wicked come droning through a tube! It is a sweet and humane

device. But the stranger may forget these minor evils of an over-strained civilization when he stands on Brooklyn Bridge—that marvel of engineering skill—and gazes at the island where Bartholdi's statue of Liberty will some day get itself erected; when he walks up Fifth Avenue and surveys the magnificent Cathedral, and the mansions of millionaires who decorate their walls with mother-of-pearl panels and brocaded silk; when he passes the whole length of that great streak of bustling activity, Broadway, and observes the many-storied buildings devoted to commerce; when he muses in Central Park—by the way, you must never tell an American that Hyde Park is as big as Central Park, for he will promptly confound you with statistics, showing that the latter is the larger by several hundred acres; when you wander through the glories of Tiffany's, taste the seductive cookery of Delmonico's, and ponder on the strange fortunes of the proprietor of that gorgeous caravanserai, the Hoffman House; and when you reflect with an enthusiastic friend of mine, that New York commands the most varied market of dainties in the world, where you will find in one day all the produce of all the climes of the American continent. Think, too, that in this city may be found the rarest treasures of Japanese art, such as collectors in London and Paris have not dreamt of. There are astute Americans who have obtained from needy *daimios* in Japan the most precious porcelain and tapestries—china that is kept perpetually swathed in jealous folds, and rugs that are hoarded away in chests. Where are the *chiffonniers* of Chelsea and South Kensington and Bedford Park? Are they so spiritless that they stop at home, idly vapouring over commonplace *bric-à-brac*, while their American rivals ransack the wonders of the East? But there are disappointments in New York. I was in a Japanese curiosity-shop one day, when the shopwoman, in a mysterious whisper, said, "Would you like to see something you can't see anywhere else?" The thrill of some imminent marvel ran through my veins. I followed her breathlessly into a corner. Out of a drawer she took a bottle which contained a horrible, shapeless, sickly-yellow substance. "It's Guiteau's finger," she said with a gleam of triumph in her eye. "When his body was handed over to the dissectors at Washington, one of them gave my husband this." Such a curiosity in an Oriental collection reminded me of the immortal words of Bunthorne:

"I am not fond of all one sees
That's Japanese."

Amidst all this jumble of art and eccentricity there is one figure which no visitor to New York can forget. It is the statue of Admiral Farragut, in Madison Square, that indomitable old sailor who did so much to shatter the resources of the South in the Civil War. The sculptor is Mr. St. Gaudens, purely an American, though his name denotes a foreign element in some former generation. He has performed the difficult task of making heroic a figure clad in naval uniform; and the inspiration expressed in the inscription on the monument, that those who came after Farragut, "and who will owe him so much, may see him as he was seen by friend and foe," has been perfectly realized by the artist.

There is a good deal more of the artistic spirit in New York than may be discerned by the casual observer. Everything is not given up to the Juggernaut of dollars. If chance should take the stranger into the offices of the *Century* magazine, he will rub his eyes and wonder whether he is in a new world. Here is the perfection of æsthetic decoration, and it seems impossible that the clerks should write anything but triolets in their ledgers. Doors are replaced by *portières*, and there is a mingling of soft-coloured wood and pleasant pictures and delightful curtains which make Broadway look sorry and sordid when you return to the street. The *Century* magazine suggests the Century Club, where there is a genial knot of artists and men of letters, and men of business who do not lose their literary tastes in commerce. Then there is the Authors' Club, snug and cosy; and in the same building are the Fencers, whose *maître d'armes*, an alert little man, with a bright eye glancing through his helmet, pauses in a bout with a pupil, to make you welcome.

Out of the Tile Club, which is approached through a narrow passage dimly lighted by a lantern, and leading to one of the oldest little houses in New York, has sprung much fine work, including the new school of American wood-engraving, which has made no small noise in the world. And if you find your way down that passage into a little room, which is fragrant with perfume dearest to the nostrils of man, you will hear an excellent song and a good story; and amidst the pictures scattered about

you will be struck by the portrait of the sweet-faced model who lives upstairs, and takes care of the house and her mother and her three little sisters, and who is beginning to paint with a skill which is vigorously commended by that pleasant company of artists.

And if you want more stately quarters in club-land, you can repair to the Lotos, which has a marvellous glass door and mellifluous minions in livery, and a smoking-room illuminated by the electric light and decorated with sweet reasonableness. There was a lively scene in this club when Mr. Irving appeared there the first Saturday after his arrival in New York. The mild-eyed, melancholy lotos-eaters assembled in great force, received him with enthusiastic acclamations, and did their utmost to produce in his mind that contentment with his lot which might have made him sing:

> Our island home
> Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.

That evening reminds me of another scene, when Mr. Irving had a similar reception at the banquet given by the Press Club of New York to certain of its members who had been elected to public offices. It is a remarkable feature of American politics that, after the most bitter contest within living memory, party feeling has been subdued by the influence of citizenship. On this occasion nothing was said that could excite political controversy, although full scope was given to discursiveness by this liberal announcement: "The plan of permitting each speaker to talk on whatever subject he may choose, has been adopted to meet the requirements of speakers who usually declare their ability to speak to any other toast than the one selected for them." I must say that this liberty was fully exercised by the orators, who told all the good stories they could think of.

Perhaps the palm belongs to Mr. Chauncey Depew, one of the most brilliant lawyers in the States, for his anecdotes of Horace Greeley. One of them I will venture to repeat. Greeley was seated at his desk one day, when a missionary collector came and said: "Mr. Greeley, will you subscribe to a fund for saving two millions of people from going to hell?" "Not a darned cent," squeaked the editor of the *Tribune*; "most of them don't know they are there already!" By the way, it was Mr. Depew who, in a speech at Yale the other day, declared that Henry Irving had

done more than any Englishman in recent years to cement the good feeling between England and America.

And Mr. Depew's name reminds me of another distinguished American, Mr. Evarts, of whom there is a story which may be interesting at a time when all candidates for office in America are unusually expectant. A certain citizen asked Mr. Evarts, who was then Secretary of State, for a post abroad. "There is nothing but a consulate in Spain," was the answer; "do you know Spanish?" The applicant said he was not intimately acquainted with that language, but he thought that a month with a tutor would make him competent to take the office. "Very well," said Mr. Evarts; "come back in a month." So the ambitious citizen got a tutor, and worked several hours a day till he was tolerably proficient in the ordinary colloquialisms of Spain. Then he went back to Washington. "Oh," said Mr. Evarts, "we filled up the post last week." "Then what am I to do with all this Spanish?" demanded the indignant candidate. "I don't know," said Evarts. Then, as if a bright idea had struck him, "Why, of course you can read 'Don Quixote' in the original."

After a long depression, theatrical affairs in this city show a marked revival of energy. Mr. Irving's return has given a fillip to controversy, and his Hamlet especially has been the cause of much literary exercise. There can be no two opinions as to his conquest of the public and of most of the critics. Some writers who have hitherto observed a hostile attitude have been completely won by the Hamlet. On the other hand, it has been announced in one quarter that this Hamlet could not be popular; and that Mr. Irving ought to cease to represent the tragedy in America. The great audiences to which "Hamlet" has been played afford the best testimony to the popularity of the representation. Never since Mr. Irving first played the Danish Prince has he made a deeper impression on his public in this character than he has made here. There are critics who admit its fine qualities, but complain that it is melodramatic. One of them took exception to the opening of the soliloquy, "To be or not to be," on this ground. If anybody can explain in what the melodramatic characteristic of this part of the performance consists, he will add something to the curiosities of literature. If to be real, vivid, and human, instead of merely declamatory and rhetorical, is to be melodramatic, then the critics who see this quality in Mr. Irving's soliloquies have

a slight account to settle with Shakespeare. But after all, this is a small matter. There can be no doubt that Mr. Irving's Hamlet has taken its place in the gallery of great theatrical achievements in this country. No man could watch the audience every time the tragedy was represented without seeing that it made the most vivid and novel impression on their minds and emotions. As for Miss Terry, nothing could be more complete than the success of her Ophelia. It has won the tribute of many tears.

Nor can there be any dispute as to the success of "Twelfth Night." As in Boston, so in New York, this play has attracted immense numbers of people, who have enjoyed it thoroughly from beginning to end. There has never been a dull moment, and it would be difficult to exaggerate the impression made by the entire engagement. Artistically and financially the result of Mr. Irving's third visit to New York has placed beyond all possibility of doubt the realization of the highest hopes he may have built upon this tour. All the forebodings of failure or only partial success, owing to various considerations—chief among them the political ferment in America—have gone to the limbo of dire mistakes. That the receipts for the two performances on Saturday last—"Hamlet" and "Louis XI."—should have reached the extraordinary total of £1,300, shows how zealously and thoroughly the public have supported the enterprise. And the receipts for the four weeks' engagement at the Star Theatre exceed those of the last month that Mr. Irving spent in this city. Every play in Mr. Irving's repertory has strengthened its hold upon the public, and has been received more enthusiastically at the last representation than at the first: a more significant fact than this it would be impossible to state.

The Star does not compare very favourably with the best theatres in New York. The Metropolitan Opera House and the Academy of Music are almost too large for dramatic entertainment, but the Grand Opera House is a fine theatre. Here it was, by the way, that I first heard a professed imitation of the London Cockney dialect in a strong American accent. This accent is a difficult theme for the foreigner to handle, but I may say without guile that some of the most agreeable intonations that linger in my ear I have heard in an American theatre. There is a lady at Daly's—Miss Edith Kingdon is her name—whose voice would charm the most prejudiced of Britishers. A very pleasant enter-

tainment is generally to be found at Daly's Theatre, though Mr. Daly was lately unwise enough to set his admirable company the uncongenial task of representing the feudal manners of a blue-blooded aristocracy. It is odd to see in a theatre like this such a primitive arrangement as a light thrown on the stage from the back of the gallery. This crudity is not so surprising in the Casino, which seems to be managed on a good old-fashioned plan, though its Moorish decorations, the electric light in the auditorium, and the ingenious construction of the seats, contrast strangely with the primeval methods of stage-effect. Of every three seats in the Casino two may be folded up, so as to permit free access from one row to another. A similar expedient is practised at the Union Square Theatre, where, moreover, the back of your seat clings fondly to your spine when you lean forward. Wallack's Theatre—where the veteran, Lester Wallack, has been playing some of his best parts with all his old distinction—is a pretty house ; and the Madison Square Theatre deserves all that has been said in praise of its revolving stage. Perhaps it is fastidious to suggest that the orchestra in the theatre where Miss Fanny Davenport is playing in "Fédora" should be a little more abreast of the times, for the performance of the gentleman who fatigues himself by producing imitations of barnyard melodies seem to belong to a bygone age. Over "on the Surrey side," that is to say, in Jersey city, the laurels of the drama are monopolized by a clever little personage, who is said to have made a fortune out of a strange conglomeration of tricks which passes as a drama of modern life. There is an immense variety of tastes in this as in every country, and he is an unfortunate artist who does not succeed in pleasing one of them. Even the ingenious gentleman who, with the exquisite delicacy of his class, gave a caricature of Mr. Irving as Shylock, at the entertainment for the benefit of the Actors' Fund, yesterday, after the tragedian had played in the trial scene from "The Merchant of Venice," had his admirers. Mr. Irving had the felicity of witnessing part of this burlesque from the box where he sat chatting with Mr. Cleveland, the President-elect. Last night the other candidate for the suffrages of the American people, Mr. Blaine, saw the performance of "Twelfth Night" at the Star, and came behind the scenes to say gracious things.

Of all the entertainments in New York the most curious,

perhaps, was that lately given at Chickering Hall by Mr. George Cable and Mr. Clemens, better known as Mark Twain. A greater contrast between two men was never seen. Mr. Cable has a bright Southern face, small short figure, and a bright penetrating voice, of which he scarcely knows the value yet. Mark Twain is a tall man, loosely made, who strolls upon the platform and looks round with an air of pained surprise, as much as to say, "They told me you would come, but I didn't believe it!" He has a deep voice, with a peculiar drawl, which lends piquancy to the humour of his stories. I cannot say that Mr. Cable's readings from his own novels were entirely interesting. They seemed sometimes to lack the fibre necessary for dramatic effect in recitation. One story of the war, descriptive of a woman's night-ride with her child through the Federal lines, was very graphic; but the rest were too purely literary to make a deep impression on the listener. Mr. Cable did one thing which is probably new in the history of dramatic readers. He began by singing, without accompaniment, a kind of croning wail in negro dialect. Presently he changed the key in order that "any of the congregation who wished" might join in the melody. This curious alliance between the platform and the camp-meeting was an interesting illustration of the character and associations of the novelist who has revealed some neglected phases of life in the Southern States. As for Mark Twain, he had only to tell his stories of a desperate encounter with an interviewer, from whom he successfully concealed his crime, and of the happily averted duel in Kansas where in early times it was impossible to hold your own in the circles of fashion unless you had shot somebody or had been shot yourself. He had only to tell these delightful yarns to put every one into the best possible humour. The climax of the duel story is not to be forgotten. After an eloquent denunciation of the barbarous and sanguinary usage, which he entreated everybody to help him in putting down, he said: "And now that I am old, if any man were to send me a challenge, I should take him by the hand, lead him to a secluded spot, *and kill him.*" It may be that all the humour lies in unexpected shocks, which are not so thrilling after reflection; but at the moment the effect is irresistible.

I am afraid that Englishmen are too apt to judge of American life and manners by the momentary shocks they receive in this city. When you nearly twist your ankle in a hole in the

side-walks, or break your toes against a jagged flagstone; when you see gentry of an ill-favoured type picking their teeth at street-corners as they sit on a kind of throne to have their boots blacked; when you hear of the exploits of adventurous reporters who are determined to have the latest "fashionable intelligence;" when you read that at a certain entertainment "great heroes of the footlights forgot their august quality, and condescended to smile upon coquettish *comédiennes*, and to chuck ballet-girls under the chin"—a wholly imaginary picture of theatrical manners—; when you learn how a certain judge's "melting eyes" were riveted on a shoe which a lady took off her foot in court, and how she expressed a desire to "mash" him; when you are told that a candidate for vocal honours, who believed herself badly used by the critics, pointed to some flowers and exclaimed, "Every rose has been plucked from those baskets to give to those dear reporters. Oh, I love them! The idea of their treating me so shamefully! I've always been good to them, and to criticize me in that way when they don't know one note from another! I think it's downright mean;"—when you receive all these little shocks, the immediate effect is not agreeable. But it is a much greater shock to a proper sense of eternal fitness to suppose that American manners are made up of these things. No Englishman, who is at all sensible of the manifold mummeries of society in his own country, would care to have English manners judged by their standard. It is an excellent corrective to British arrogance to remember the ease with which Mr. Gotobed, in Trollope's novel, "The American Senators," picked holes in the social and political institutions which he went to England to study. Perhaps that great class of Americans who live at home amidst all the domestic comforts, and occasionally wonder why Englishmen should say that there is no home-life in New York; perhaps the clear-sighted honest men who know perfectly well what are the real merits of the copyright question, but are like the courteous and genial publisher who said yesterday with a merry smile, "Well, I confess I am weary of the whole business: there's a friend of mine over the way; go to him, and he will get on a table to give you an address;" perhaps the cultured editor, frank, sympathetic and refined, who says with a sigh that this is a stiff-necked generation: perhaps these people do not make a constant effort to place their views of life in the mind's eye of the whole world. But if we be-

think ourselves of the errors and shortcomings which we survey with easy tolerance at home, we shall not be so ready to rush through America, regarding everything with a disdainful sniff, and to hurry a book through the press on our return, in order to show that all the possibilities of Democracy have been exhausted.

One thing, at all events, is certain. Of the kindness with which visitors from the old country are everywhere received in this, it is impossible to speak too warmly. Here and there you will occasionally find a citizen who is prone to belabour the Britisher in the abstract, but he is like the American in the story, who, after a furious denunciation of England, and a declaration that all Englishmen ought to be shot, turned to a Briton, and, quite innocent of irony, said warmly, "When are you coming down to my place to stay a few weeks, and have some shooting?" Now and then the American eagle flaps his wings over some article in an English journal. I learned from one scribe the other day that something in the *Saturday Review* was "an outrage on syntactical decency." But an Englishman who comes here, and does not try to go through society as if he were a fretful porcupine, will find most people prepared to be to his virtues ever kind, and to his faults a little blind.

KEAN IN PAWN.—When Kean became the star of the day, he played at Richmond for one night in "Othello." The manager, Klanert, was an old friend of the tragedian's. Kean received half the receipts for his services, amounting to £70. After the play, he adjourned to the "Star and Garter" with the friends that came with him from London. A sumptuous supper—cards to follow. Play at loo and whist ran high. Before daylight, Kean was minus his £70 and £10 more. His friends remained to breakfast. Kean sent the following note to Klanert by a waiter:—

"DEAR JACK,—I'm in pawn. Take me out like a trump, as you are. Send me a £10 note by the waiter. I don't like to borrow of my friends, or to stain our cloth by not paying. The £10 will make 'Richard himself again.'—Yours, KEAN."

Of course, "Jack" sent the needful, and Kean was released.

# Our Omnibus-Box.

OUR valued musical critic, Mr. Wm. Beatty-Kingston, sends the following "Genesis of a Farce":—

In these degenerate days it takes two men—sometimes three—to write a play, or even to adapt one from a foreign tongue. Perhaps it may be doubted that the results of this method of producing theatrical pieces, by division of labour, are altogether satisfactory, or that contemporary dramas, comedies, and even farces exhibit the creative spontaneity or constructive unity characterizing their forerunners, for the most part written by men who could dispense with the assistance of collaborateurs. Even now, though it is the fashion for dramatic authors to work in couples, the most effective, and consequently popular, pieces—at least in France and Germany—are the intellectual offspring of exceptions to the general rule, such as Sardou, the younger Dumas and Ohnet, Lindau, von Moser, and L'Arronge. Many entertaining plays, however, that hold the stage for hundreds of nights at a stretch are the outcome of two intelligences, temporarily combined in such sort as to supplement each other with more or less fitness; the one taking charge of the plot, situations, and "gag," whilst the other provides the dialogue; or haply each partner in the enterprise dealing with his fair share of the piece in its entirety, scene and scene about, so to speak. Associates in undertakings of this kind generally keep their methods of operation profoundly secret; all the more interesting and piquant, therefore, will be found the revelations recently made by Messrs. Franz and Paul von Schoenthan with respect to the genesis of a farce intituled "The Rape of the Sabines," lately produced under their joint names, and which has scored an almost unprecedented success in various parts of Germany. In the form of a correspondence, epistolary and telegraphic, interchanged between the brother-authors last year, and published by their permission in the columns of a leading German periodical, the biography of the piece in question is narrated with infinite verve and geniality. Its preface, or introductory chapter, is set forth in the following letter from Paul von Schoenthan (addressed to the editor of the *German Illustrated News*), which, as well as the correspondence above alluded to, I shall endeavour to faithfully reproduce in translation.

"You were so kind as to ask us—the authors of the farce 'The Rape of the Sabines'—to furnish you with a few details of the genesis of that dramatic co-operative product; and, as the story of its origin is not altogether an ordinary one, I gladly comply with your request. Chance, the supernatural being who befriends all creative spirits, stood sponsor to 'The Rape of the Sabines'; and in all probability the simple reproduction of a correspondence which took place between my brother and myself before we commenced our work will prove the readiest means of making you acquainted with the genesis of the play."

Here follow the letters and telegrams referred to by Herr Paul von Schoenthan :—

"Schandau, *Aug.* 8, 1883.

"Yes, my dear fellow, you were perfectly right. This is a capital place. I get more real rest here in a day than I do in Vienna in a whole year; and yet, even in this blissful calm, a disturbing element is not lacking, thanks to the abominably indiscreet Kur-Liste, which has betrayed my presence here. Yesterday I was honoured by a visit from an illustrious Roumanian lady who resides and—writes poetry in Dresden. She had a white Rembrandt hat on her head and a blue manuscript under her arm, both of astounding dimensions. According to my approximative appraisement, the manuscript contained about three pounds weight of five-footed iambics. Upon its cover was inscribed in violet ink, with every imaginable variety of calligraphic flourish, 'The Rape of the Sabines.' . . . . 'Quite incomprehensibly,' this Roman tragedy had been rejected by the Hofburg Theatre at Vienna; and, as its author was so good as to remember that I had accepted the appointment of chief stage-manager at the Vienna Stadt Theatre, she recommended me to bring out her child of sorrow upon the stage of that establishment. In vain did I endeavour to persuade her that the Stadt Theatre was not at all suited to that class of entertainment, and that my recommendation would prove absolutely impotent to obtain her tragedy a hearing; she would not budge an inch, and finally disarmed me by the terrific poser, 'Did you not produce Spielhagen's "Arria and Meslina"?' 'Wilbrandt's,' I ventured to suggest, by way of correction. 'Ah, yes. I always mix up those two; for, don't you see, . . . .;' and so it went on for another eighteen minutes or so, for this eccentric dame mixed up everything anyhow. At length she withdrew, having extorted from me the solemn promise that I would read her manuscript at once, and let her know what I thought of it in the course of the day.

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"As far as this I had written with the agreeable conviction that nothing more than a transitory interruption of my peace was to be apprehended. But the poetess has just been here again; this time her head was adorned with a blue baretta encircled by feathers. She introduced herself with the exclamation, 'My manuscript!' No one could have exhibited more unhesitating promptitude in handing it to her than I did. "Do you know what I am going to do with this?" she shouted; and, before I could give utterance to my total incapacity for conjecture in that direction, she held up before me for inspection a number of the *Dresden News*, in which there was some reference to the inauguratory performance of the German Theatre in Berlin, the date of which, by the way, was at that time not even fixed. The excited lady regarded this harmless announcement as a sign from Heaven, and removed an enormous weight from my breast by ejaculating, 'I shall bestow my play upon the German Theatre—I am off to Berlin at once.' In the same breath, however, she pleaded her absolute helplessness, and besought me for letters of introduction. This woman, in spite of her peculiarities, has a way with her that renders it extremely difficult to refuse her anything. But whom can I plant her upon without

running the risk of incurring his eternal enmity? The offence is one which only a brother can forgive in a brother. I gave her your address! She will call upon you!! It was a step prompted by despair. When all is said and done, a man is bound to consider himself even before his brother. "FRANZ."

"BERLIN, *Aug.* 11, 1883.

"Frau von W—— made her appearance at my rooms to-day, in a Scotch plaid Niniche hat. I don't know what possessed her to take me for Wildenbruch, whose moustache is much bigger than mine, and who writes successful tragedies, whereas I am dramatically blameless. She praised my 'Harold upon Harold,' by which she possibly meant Wildenbruch's 'Sacrifice upon Sacrifice,' and entreated me to make her acquainted, at once, with L'Arrönge, the venerated theatrical manager and genial author of the 'Bloody Marriage.' I endeavoured to intimidate her, and to impress upon her how audacious it would be to come before the critical Berlin public with the first-fruits of her dramatic inspiration. That seemed to strike her, but a moment later she remembered that G. von Moser had just put his new piece, 'The Arrow-Test,' into rehearsal at Warmbrunn. The unhappy creature meant Blumenthal's 'Trial-Shaft.' 'Yes,' I suggested, 'under the management of Georgi'—filled with joy as I was by the sweet hope that she would start for Warmbrunn on the spot. She gave some consideration to the notion of looking up Manager Jacobi ('Georgi,' I murmured timidly), but then recollected that a lady could hardly venture to take such a step, and piteously implored me to give her some good sound advice about the best way of getting her play rehearsed. Nothing occurred to me but to refer her to you for assistance. You sent your authoress to me; I send my authoress to you. Sauve qui peut! "PAUL."

"SCHANDAU, *Aug.* 16, 1883.

"This affair begins to amuse me. Yesterday at noon the authoress of the Roman drama arrived again at Schandau, this time with a travelling cap enveloped in a thick blue veil. She caught me in the passage, just inside my street door. This female is endowed with sufficient perseverance and energy to remove mountains. Just imagine; she declared herself ready to make any pecuniary sacrifice in order to bring about an experimental performance of her play, and it occurred to me that quite lately, during a long day's excursion I made to O——, I had there encountered an out-at-elbows strolling manager and eight poverty-stricken mummers. It would be a real charity to give the poor devil a helping hand. So, after the table d'hôte, I drove over to O—— with Frau von W——, and introduced her to the said manager. That experienced vagabond grasped the situation in a trice, and treated my protégée with all the reverence which her sacrificial character merited. Negotiations were opened at the inn in which the mimes had set up their head-quarters; and, as I glided noiselessly from the shabby dining-room, I saw her already established at the table (laid for ten) surrounded by the manager and his eight acolytes, who had ordered roast goose and cucumber salad as one man, stimulated to this bold emprise by the prospect

of fattening times to come. She had produced her manuscript, and was reading it aloud to the manager, who was listening with an inexpressibly stupid, but beaming, expression of countenance. I sneaked off through the garden. At the gate the manager's wife squeezed my hand with grateful emotion. Oh! celestial Poesy, thus dost thou console the oppressed and feed the famished! "FRANZ."

"BERLIN, *Aug.* 21, 1883.

"The annihilation of distance by railways is a curse. Frau von W—— is back again at Berlin. She seems to put some faith in the experimental performance at O——. What do you think this woman wants me to do? To induce the Intendant-General of the Royal Theatres, von Huelsen, to go over to O——, where 'The Rape of the Sabines' has already been industriously rehearsed. There were ten rehearsals 'with costumes and properties' for the first act alone. This, you must know, is the act in which the banquet takes place at the palace of King Titus Tatius. It has all been done at the author's expense. In vain I strove to convince her that His Excellency Herr von Huelsen's dislike to travelling was insurmountable; however, at last she allowed herself to be dissuaded from insisting upon our Intendant-General's presence at the experimental performance. Then she broke out with the threat, 'But Wilbrandt and Laube must positively be there!' If I understood her rightly, she wrote the part of Titus Tatius specially for Wilbrandt!

"If engine-drivers and pointsmen fulfil their duties accurately, she will turn up again to-morrow evening about nine in Schandau, where she will straightway exhort you to bring Laube and Wilbrandt over to O——. She considers your obligation to do so the natural and necessary consequence of the trouble you took about the 'experimental performance.' Good heaven! what a hat that woman had on again to-day! "PAUL."

*(Telegram from Schandau.)*

"Your letter just received. There is no safety but in flight. Shall take advantage of the very next express train to Vienna. "FRANZ."

*(Post Card.)*

"VIENNA, *Saturday morning.*

"Just arrived, safe and sound. During the night a happy thought occurred to me. This whole episode with Frau von W—— and her Roman tragedy is superb material for a comic piece. I shall set to work to-morrow morning, and see what I can make of it. "FRANZ."

*(Post Card.)*

"BERLIN, *Saturday morning.*

"This she-Roumanian, with her 'Rape of the Sabines,' has suggested the notion to me of writing a farcical piece, based upon all the comic incidents of which she has been the heroine. I shall turn to and work this idea out as soon as possible. "PAUL."

*(Telegram.)*

"BERLIN, *Sunday morning.*

"Our cards have crossed one another, but our ideas were one and the same. I admit your right to precedence, and retire in your favour.

"PAUL."

*(Telegram.)*

"VIENNA, *Sunday morning.*

"Not a bit of it. We will write the piece together. Title: 'The Rape of the Sabines.'

"FRANZ."

And so they did.

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Our Melbourne correspondent writes:—"On Saturday, October 4, Frank Harvey's drama, 'The Workman,' was produced at the Princess Theatre for the first time in the Australian colonies. It was a decided failure, so much so that the theatre closed its doors till the arrival of the opera company from Sydney on Saturday, October 25, when Planquette's 'Les Cloches de Corneville' was produced. The only item of interest in this production was the first appearance in Australia of Miss Emma Chambers, late of your Alhambra, who sang the music allotted to Serpolette. She has made a decided and successful *entrée*, and, should she be able to maintain the same level of excellence achieved in this opera, will do extremely well. 'The Merry Duchess' will be played for the first time in Melbourne on Saturday, November 1, Derby night. It has had a successful run in Sydney. 'The Silver King' was withdrawn on Monday, October 13, at the Theatre Royal, for 'Extremes, or Men of the Day,' with Mrs. Chippendale as the star actress. On Saturday, October 25, 'The Rivals' was produced, replacing 'Extremes.' The season has been a disastrous failure. It was in contemplation to play a series of the old comedies, but our audiences will not have them. 'The Silver King' is to be revived on Saturday next, November 1, and will be followed by a revival of 'The Turn of the Tide.' 'Fun on the Bristol' has been drawing well at the Bijou Theatre. On Saturday, November 1, the company vacate the Bijou Theatre in favour of Miss Marie De Grey and company, who open in 'Moths.' The 'Bristol' company open with the same entertainment at St. George's Hall. The only novelty at the Opera House has been the production of 'In the Ranks,' on Saturday, October 25. This drama, with Mr. George Rignold and Miss Kate Bishop as the hero and heroine, bids fair to have a long run. Eduardo Remenyi, the Hungarian violinist, has been giving a highly successful series of concerts at the Town Hall. Mr. Gerald Massey and General Sheridan are lecturing in the neighbouring colonies. 'Romeo and Juliet,' with Miss Fanny Reid as Juliet, is drawing fairly well in Adelaide. Mr. Wybert Reeve has been playing 'The Crushed Tragedian' and 'Stolen Verses' to good business in the same town. Miss De Grey is having a highly successful season in Sydney; Frank Harvey's 'Woman against Woman' has been her trump card at the Opera House. 'The Wages of Sin' has been a failure at the Sydney Theatre Royal. New Zealand is, at present, overrun with second-rate companies of no particular interest."

It is with much regret that I have to record that Mr. E. H. Brooke died, from congestion of the lungs, at his residence near Clapham Common, on Sunday, November 30. Professionally known as Edward Harcourt Brooke, his real name was Edwin James Macdonald Brook. He was born on June 12, 1843, so that he was little over forty-one years old at the time of his death. After an arduous career in the provinces, Mr. Brooke came to London, making his first appearance in the metropolis at the Prlncess's Theatre on July 10, 1862, as the Lord Chamberlain in "Henry VIII." He established himself at the Adelphi and Sadler's Wells Theatres. In 1876, at the Lyceum Theatre, he played Cassio to Mr. Irving's Othello, and Simon Renard in the Laureate's drama, "Queen Mary." In March, 1879, he acted Rob Roy in the late Edward Saker's revival at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool; and, in December of the following year, he came to Sadler's Wells, where, among other characters, he acted Joseph Surface. In April, 1882, he impersonated the Earl of Warwick in Mr. J. W. Boulding's play, "The King-maker," at the Adelphi. At the same house he had previously played George Fielding in "It's Never too Late to Mend;" and here also, in June, 1882, he acted Baradas to Mr. Edwin Booth's Richelieu. He was next selected by Mr. Wilson Barrett to act the hero of "The Silver King" in the provinces. He impersonated this character over four hundred times, playing it within four weeks of his death.

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Fanny Elssler, the celebrated dancer, died at her residence in Vienna on Thursday, November 27, at the age of seventy-three. She was born in Vienna in 1811, and, having acquired considerable fame on the Continent, was engaged for Her Majesty's Theatre, where she made her first appearance on March 9, 1833. Her success was brilliant, and ten years later she successfully competed at the same theatre with Cerito and Adèle Dumilâtre, having previously made, in conjunction with her sister Theresa, a brilliant tour in America. She secured for herself a considerable fortune, and retired to her birthplace, where she devoted herself to the exercise of the Catholic religion, and, it is said, the preparation of her memoirs for publication.

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A kind correspondent has sent us an extract from an old London newspaper in connection with the Macklin disturbance of 1773.

"*The London Chronicle*, Oct. 30, Nov. 2, for 1773.

Mr. Macklin's speech to the audience at Covent Garden Theatre last Saturday evening, with some proceedings in consequence thereof.

"Mr. Macklin, last Saturday night, at Covent Garden Theatre, just before the play began, entered upon the stage with a large parcel of newspapers in his hand, and addressed the audience to the following purport :—

"'Ladies and Gentlemen,

"'My appearing before you in my own character, instead of that which I am this night appointed to perform, is an unexpected measure; but in my distressed condition, from my feelings as a man and an actor, and in order to produce decency in this theatre to-night, and from my duty to the public, I humbly hope it will be found to be a necessary one.

"'I am sensible that, by a certain set of people, this address to you will be deemed a very saucy step, and that their wishes and endeavours will be that it may be attended with a very serious and fatal animadversion; but I hope and trust that it will excite a very different effect in the minds of the candid and the just, when they shall have heard my motive for this proceeding, which, with your indulgence and protection, I will humbly lay before you.'

"Here the audience, seemingly as with one voice, and with loud applause, cried out, 'Ay, ay, ay; go on, go on;' but the applause and approbation being over, a single person in the pit cried out, 'No, no, no; you shall not be heard—off! off!' On which the numbers in the pit, with great indignation, started up, and the whole house cried, 'Turn him out; turn him out—out, out, out, out with the rascal!'

"This was an ill-dressed, mean-looking man, not known to any one in the pit who saw him, though great inquiry was made. He begged that he might be permitted to keep his place, which, on his promise of keeping silence, was granted. Mr. Macklin then proceeded:—

"'Through the course of my theatrical life I have constantly thought it the duty of an actor, and his best policy, to regulate his conduct in such a manner as to merit the credit and esteem of those who know him, so as to be able, by moral justness, to defy and to be proof against all insinuations, aspersions, or open attacks upon his private character. This has been my constant doctrine, this my constant policy; and, as a proof of my practice being conformable to these principles, I here appeal, not to hearsay, credulity, or party, but to all who know me, and I call upon every individual of the public in this great metropolis to produce, if they can, a single instance to the contrary.'

"On which a person cried out, 'That is a bold challenge, Mr. Macklin.'

"To which Mr. Macklin answered, 'Sir, I will abide by it, and I repeat it—I say, a single instance.' He proceeded:—

"'From the first of my appearing upon the stage I have met with the indulgence, protection, and encouragement of a benevolent public, until I attempted to act the part of Macbeth last Saturday. In that attempt I have not the least reason to complain of that awful and impartial tribunal which, from my observation and the experience of the oldest actors I have known, never yet condemned piece or actor that had merit; but the usage I have met with from news-writers is without example in the history of the stage. I have here in my hand folios of paragraphs, epigrams, intelligences, and what is called criticisms, upon me, some even before I appeared in the character, such as do no great honour to the press, or to the genius, candour, or erudition of the gentlemen who produced them. I will not give a name or a quality to these productions; the present public and posterity, should they meet with them, will do it for me.

"At this juncture a voice in the gallery cried out to Mr. Macklin, 'Account for your indignation last Saturday.'

"Mr. Macklin answered 'That he did not understand what that gentleman meant.'

"But the audience in the gallery were more effectual in their answer to

him, by unanimously crying out, 'Out, out, out with the rascal;' and as we are informed, a genteel young man, with great coolness and civility, told this bawler that it was ungenteel in him to disturb the audience, when he saw that they were resolved to hear what Mr. Macklin had to say. The bawler answered, 'Sir, Macklin is an impudent fellow for daring to play Macbeth, or any part of Mr. Garrick's; besides, he affronted the audience last Saturday night, and I was one of them, and will resent it.'

"The young gentleman replied, 'Sir, if Mr. Macklin has affronted you, it would be more like a man of spirit and a gentleman to call him to an account in private than to attack him in this ungentleman-like manner.'

"The bawler replied, 'Sir, I am as good a gentleman as you, and you are impertinent in offering to animadvert on my conduct.'

"The answer the young gentleman made him, though in prose, was epigrammatical and decisive, which was this: 'Sir, I do not believe from your manners or your conduct that you have any title to gentility; or, by your appearance, from your birth or fortune; I take you to be some mean, noisy rascal; and if you have a mind to convince me to the contrary, I'll walk out with you, or give you my address.'

"The sting of this prose epigram, they say, made this gentleman in buckram sit down between two women of the town very quietly; and he never opened his lips the whole night after, above a whisper.

"This gentleman was Mr. Sparks, who will be better known in the course of this address.

"Mr. Macklin continued:—

"'These critics or partisans, not satisfied with their newspaper attacks upon my powers, as a man and an actor, assembled in the gallery last Saturday night, and in two or three parties dispersed about the gallery, did, by groans, laughs, hissing, and loud invectives, attack me in a violent manner.

"'These parties were headed by two gentlemen, whom, for the sake of truth and justice, with your permission, I will name.

"'The one was Mr. Reddish, a player belonging to Drury Lane Theatre; the other, one Mr. Sparks, a son of the late Luke Sparks, of worthy memory, an actor belonging to Covent Garden Theatre.

"'N.B.—This Sparks is a man who intends to be a player; has been soliciting Mr. Garrick lately, and has had hopes, as we are informed, of being entertained by that gentleman.

"'This charge I own is a heavy one against Mr. Reddish in particular, as he is himself an actor: it is likewise heavy on Mr. Sparks, who intends to be one. Mr. Garrick, in his own defence, I am told, inquired into this matter in a formal manner behind the scenes; and upon the evidence produced by Mr. Reddish and Mr. Sparks, I am informed that Mr. Garrick did acquit Mr. Reddish of the charge. The printer of the *Morning Chronicle* did inform the public that he was deceived in the account that was given of Mr. Reddish having hissed Mr. Macklin.

"'But I here pledge myself to give a positive proof of the fact of Mr. Reddish's hissing, which shall be supported by all the circumstances of probability and truth. I am afraid I have taken up too much of your

time, yet, with your permission, I have a few words more to offer on this disagreeable subject.'

"The audience desired him to proceed, which he did as follows :—

"'The condition of an actor on the first night of his performing such a character as Macbeth is the most alarming to a mind anxious to gain the public favour of any condition that the pursuit of fame or fortune can cast man into.

"'A dull, plodding actor, whose utmost merit is mediocrity, is in no danger; he plods on from the indulgence of the public, and their habit of seeing him in safety. He never is in danger of offending by starts of genius, or by the unruly fire that the fury of his spirits enkindles. Mediocrity is his merit; mediocrity is all that is expected from him: mediocrity is his protection. But the actor that can be impassioned in the extreme, and is inflamed by Shakespeare's genius, will, on his first appearance in Macbeth, be carried out of the reach of sober judgment, and of wary, nice discretion; those passions and that flame will run away with him, will make him almost breathless; crack or hoarsen his voice; arrest his memory; confuse his sight, his action, gait, and deportment; and all that candour and the nicest judgment can expect from him is that he showed he understood his character; that he gave noble marks of genius and judgment; and that when he had played the part half-a-dozen times he would then charm and convince his audience of his powers, and of his having a competent capacity for it.

"'But let this man be but checked by a single hiss, all his fire will instantly cool; his spirits abate their motions. Grief and despair will seize him; and at once he becomes the pining, broken-hearted slave of the tyrant that ruined a wretch that was labouring to please him, who did not dare to resent the cruelty, nor to assist himself.

"'A soldier in the very front of war, at the teeth of his enemy, and at the mouth of a cannon, is not in so wretched nor in so fatal, so hopeless a state. The noble ardour of the soldier gives him hope, alacrity, effort, double, treble vigour and courage; the very danger adds to both, and to such a degree as to make him lose even the idea of danger; and sure even death in that state is preferable to an actor who, by his post, is obliged to endure the hiss of a Reddish, or a Sparks; or a critic, who hisses him for daring to act a part of Mr. Garrick's, and who would damn him to want and infamy to show he is an admirer of Mr. Garrick.

"'I am sensible that, from my extreme anxiety to please, and the terror of being hissed, that I was imperfect, perplexed, and deficient in my performance on the first night: and in my own conception, design, and in the use of my voice and powers, beyond what the audience perceived, or could perceive; yet their indulgence was, like themselves, patient and benevolent—Mr. Reddish, his party, and Mr. Garrick's admirers excepted. They, indeed, I thought were cruel. I am not in a much better state of mind this night, yet, with your usual good nature, I hope I shall not stand worse in your esteem at the end of the play to-night than I did on the first night that I performed the part. Then only indulge and spare me on this night of my perplexity; and give me but a fair attention, uninter-

rupted, the third night. If I do not play it to the full satisfaction of the candour and judgment of my audience, I will never desire to play it again.'

"This address was received with universal applause, and he went through the character accompanied by the repeated applause of the spectators. Since which Mr. Reddish has made oath before Justice Wright that he neither hissed nor showed any other mark of disapprobation during the whole performance. Mr. Sparks has also made oath, before the above magistrate, that Mr. Reddish, whom he accompanied to the play on the first night of Mr. Macklin's performing Macbeth, neither hissed nor showed any other public mark of disapprobation; on the contrary, when Mr. Sparks once hissed, and only once, Mr. Reddish warmly requested on his own account that he would forbear; to which he assented.

"Mr. Sparks has since published a letter, addressed to Mr. Macklin, in which he positively asserts that he was not in Covent Garden Theatre last Saturday, nor even near it, at the time mentioned, which, he says, he can and will prove."

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I have noted the following strange "slips of the pen" in two recently published novels:—In Miss Braddon's "Ishmael," Madame Bosio is stated to have sung "Lucrezia Borgia" and "Fidelio" at the Paris Opéra. This she never did, nor could have done, for the simple reason that neither of the pieces in question belongs to the repertory of that theatre, and Madame Bosio, during her stay in Paris, never sang at any other. If the authoress had spoken of her as singing in Verdi's "Louise Miller," she would have been nearer the mark.—Marion Crawford, in "A Roman Singer," mentions Donizetti's "La Favorita" as having been composed by *Verdi*.

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Apropos of Miss Alma Murray's recent great successes in Edinburgh and Newcastle in "Called Back," we have received some notes, from which we extract the following:—

"We come now to the last act, consisting of one long scene, in which Pauline recovers her reason, denounces Macari, is rejoined to Gilbert, and witnesses the retribution which falls upon Macari at the hand of Petroff. Admirable as Miss Alma Murray had been in the high-bred, finished, and fervent womanhood of the Prologue, as well as in the heart-reaching pathos, the melting tenderness, and the psychological gradation of the Garret scene and the Paris scene, she here surpasses all her previous achievement, and goes beyond the power and possibility of adequate praise. The scene itself is one of the most powerful, effective, and materially exacting in the modern dramatic *répertoire;* and so exquisitely girlish, fragile, and ethereal does Miss Murray look, as she enters in her plain white dress, just relieved by the sash of faint yellow, that at the outset one instinctively shrinks at the thought of the mere physical ordeal to be gone through, ere justice can be done to the scene, by so seemingly delicate and tender an organism. Fear, however, speedily gives way to surprise, admiration, and security at the first burst of sound—so piercing yet so rich, so full in tone yet so feminine in quality, which, as Macari enters, comes from her lips, accompanied by a thrilling look, gesture, and movement at the words, 'Not that face! Not that face!'

"From this point onwards Miss Murray's performance is one unintermitting crescendo of power, inspiration, and intensity. At no single moment does she make it apparent that she in any degree approaches the limits of her strength; and even when, with the words, 'Oh, Arthur, do not let him go!' she sinks on Kenyon's breast, to all appearance senseless and shattered with the swiftness and energy of her own emotion, she leaves us with the impression that she has yet at command a reserve of power, both mental and physical, sufficient to take her at need immediately through the whole scene again. Of this indeed an approximate proof is given in the concentrated, vibrant magnificence of sound with which, before she has had time to recover from her half-swoon, she exclaims, 'It is he—Paolo Macari!'

"To follow Miss Murray in every detail of tone, look, and movement throughout the whole of this great histrionic display, would be a task as hopeless as its attempt would be delightful. There are, however, one or two passages at least in it of such superlative excellence, that there could be found no justification for leaving them without some special mention. One of these, for instance, is the delivery of the speech immediately preceding the appearance of the vision of Anthony March's murder. The opening words, 'I have dreamed and dreamed, with his white face always at my feet!' are given by Miss Murray in tones like the concentrated and suppressed ring of wrought gold, within herself, as it were, and as if she feared almost that the energy of the thought might be impaired were it allowed to escape beyond the limits of her own being. The immediately following exclamation, 'O God! and I could not see the hand that struck the blow!' bursts from her with an explosion of passionate, liberal sound, in marked contrast to the last phrase; while with the cry, 'But now it comes, it comes—at last it comes!' the actress appears to lose all conscious intellectual control; she is seized, as it were, by a spirit of Pythian frenzy, she is sundered from the sense of her own individuality, and becomes the passive 'trumpet of a prophecy;' her whole form seems to dilate, the very hair appears to start and quiver like flame over her forehead, a thrill seems to pass from the inmost seat of vitality, stirring every organic fibre on its way to the utmost finger-tips, through which it passes out, leaving them manifestly tingling; the wind of her own inspiration seems to carry her from the back of the stage nearly to the footlights; we shrink almost as at the apparition of something apocalyptic; and as the lights go down, and we lose the distinct impression of the actress's form, we are allowed to come to ourselves, feeling as if we had just passed through some poignant pathological crisis, the prolongation of which might have proved subversive of life or reason.

"With the closing words of her long accusatory speech to Macari, Pauline had fallen insensible to the ground. She is now lifted to her feet by Mary and Kenyon, and remains standing for some seconds with her back to the audience. She then turned slowly round, with the air of a half-awakened somnambulist; the eyes glance vaguely from face to face of those who are near her, and the name of the absent Gilbert falls falteringly from her lips, as if it were the latest relic of a broken dream. The wave of consciousness has begun to gather again, and fill the mental shores from which it had

receded. This it is unable to do without a manifest struggle, in the course of which the subsidence of Pauline's cerebral commotion, and her re-entry into possession of her normal faculties, are indicated by Miss Murray by a series of touches so swift, so subtle, and so significant, that the splendid attitude and ringing intonation in which, at the words, 'He is a murderer!' the struggle culminates, are as inevitably expected, and yet as startling in their emotional effect, as is the cymbal-crash with which a modern master so often marks the climax of some long orchestral crescendo."

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The Carleton Dramatic Club inaugurated their seventh season at St. George's Hall on December 9. This was an invitation soirée, and almost every London Amateur Club was represented—in the audience, be it understood. Needless to say that it was a most appreciative one. "A Regular Fix" always proves a success, provided it is acted with plenty of spirit, and, indeed, the performance was not wanting on that point. Mr. H. S. Carstairs came off with honours as Hugh de Brass, and rattled through his part with spirit and ease. Surplus and Mrs. Surplus were particularly good in the hands of Mr. J. C. Carstairs and Mrs. Viveash. The rest of the cast comprised Miss G. Findon, Miss Lillian Millward, Miss Agnes Miller, Mr. E. Woodall, Mr. H. L. Smiles, and Mr. H. W. Frankish, who did very fairly. The principal play of the evening was Henry J. Byron's four-act comedy, "The Prompter's Box," first produced at the Adelphi Theatre in 1870, and since known as "Two Stars." The original title was preserved on this occasion, and De Lacy Fitzalmont, a part created by Byron himself, undertaken by Mr. J. M. Powell. The impersonation was most successful; a very clever piece of acting, quite up to Mr. Powell's excellent standard. But the change of "make-up" for each act was rather too marked, and apt to bewilder the spectators; the author used to retain his identity throughout the play. Mr. A. T. Frankish (Ernest) was uncertain of his words, and did not show his usual earnestness. It was a very fair performance, but Mr. Frankish is too good an actor to be allowed to neglect himself. He also impersonated the small part of Capt. Racket. Much credit is due to Mr. Frank Lindo for undertaking to act Frank Bristow at three days' notice, Mr. A. E. Drinkwater being unable to appear. Mr. H. Parry, Mr. H. L. Smiles, and Mr. J. C. Carstairs were very satisfactory as Ned Bristowe, Sir Michael, and Mandeville. Mr. J. G. Slee was ridiculously made-up, and his Gadsby was a fool—by no means the author's intention. Miss Ivan Bristow, as her namesake, was charmingly natural and sympathetic; Mrs. Viveash, a delightful old lady; Miss Herman's Emily Mountcashel distressingly stagey, not one touch of nature—to quote Mrs. Gulpin, "fine dresses, but she wasn't in it." But for the curtain coming down a few minutes too soon on the first act, everything went off well.

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"Love's Labour's Lost" is so rarely seen on the stage that one can but feel grateful to the amateurs who have undertaken the arduous task of presenting Shakespeare's comedy—especially when the performance belies the title of the play, for the labour was not lost, and reflects much credit on the Irving Club. The comedy was given in full, Act iii. being incor-

porated with Act ii., and Act iv. divided into two acts. First of all, my sincere congratulations to Mr. Charles Fry for the excellent stage-management; the entre-actes were perhaps a trifle long, but when the performers were on the stage everything went off very smoothly; and the dead waits which too often hamper amateur acting, were only remarkable by their absence. The musical element was also very good. Mr. Higgs's orchestra deserves much praise; and Miss Jessie Griffin, as Spring, sang "When daisies pied" in a most pleasing manner. Now as to the individual acting, 'tis strange to note how often exalted rank on the stage is synonymous with mediocrity. Kings, queens, princes, and princesses are seldom acted so as to stand out of the picture, but merely become the shadows of their attendants. Of the Princess of France as represented by Miss Nora Perceval one can say that it was a fair but not striking performance; and the King of Navarre of Mr. H. J. Wallack was certainly a very commonplace gentleman, evidently not at home in his Elizabethan costume. It is a thousand pities that so clever a lady as Miss Annie Woodzell does not curb a strong tendency to grimace. Her acting is full of spirit and intentions, but to her features she does not vouchsafe an instant of repose; eyes and mouth work so incessantly that the play of feature is lost in actual contortion. But for this, I would pronounce her Rosaline very good. Miss E. Webster, Miss C. V. Borrodaile, and Mrs. Viveash satisfactorily filled the parts of Maria, Katherine, and Jaquenetta. Master Arthur Fry does honour to his instructor; his voice is unusually powerful for so small a boy; his Moth was well acted, and shows excellent training. He gained an encore in his song. Mr. W. H. A. Gow was truly humorous and natural as the Clown Costard; and Mr. G. F. La Serre made the insignificant part of Dull of some importance. Longaville, Boyet, the Curate, and the Schoolmaster were ably personated by Mr. C. Hayden Coffin, Mr. F. H. Macey, Mr. H. Marsh, and Mr. Augustus Littleton. No better exponents of Biron and Armado could have been chosen than Mr. B. Webster and Mr. H. D. Shepard. Would that the other members of the Irving Club, and many other amateurs, took pattern of these two gentlemen in their deportment. Surely the majority of young Englishmen are not cripples, that, as soon as they walk the stage, they should have such difficulty in moving their limbs with ease, and that the loosening of their arms from their body seems a painful wrench. Mr. B. Webster is one of the bright exceptions to this unfortunate rule; his movements are natural and graceful, and he is thoroughly at home on the boards. His Biron was excellent, his voice is pleasant in tone, and his enunciation clear; he did in truth speak his rôle trippingly on the tongue; the long speech in justification of breaking their oath was an excellent piece of elocution. The character was given in the right merry key, well carrying out Rosaline's description. Armado was in excellent hands—the most artistically dressed and made-up personage in the whole company. Mr. Shepard is also thoroughly at home on the stage; his attitudes were both picturesque and true to the character. The unconscious fooling, the serious belief in himself, the exceeding vanity of this conceited knight, were admirably portrayed; and every one must have been inclined to say with the King, "I protest, I

love to hear him lie." Mr. Shepard is a true artist. This was the second of two performances, given Thursday, 4th, and Saturday, 6th of December, at St. George's Hall, on behalf of the Artists' General Benevolent Institution. On this occasion Sir Frederick Leighton was present.

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An entertainment given by the Tottenham House Amateur Dramatic Club at the Park Hall, Camden Town, on December 13, was made the occasion for the production of a new and original comedy-drama in two acts, entitled "Birdie's Nest." The little play deservedly met with a very successful reception. Briefly stated, its plot is as follows :—A garrulous, good-natured old couple—a cabman and his wife—have befriended a girl who had been falsely charged and imprisoned; a clergyman falls in love with "Birdie," their protégée, who has, it transpires, already a husband who has deserted her. This discovery ends the first act. In the concluding portion of the plot the old couple are found to be poor, and Birdie supporting them by the sale of her sketches. News comes that her rascally husband is dead, and the clergyman is rewarded for his faithfulness by the promise of her hand. Into this simple and familiar story some excellent character-sketches are woven, and these are treated freshly and dramatically in the dialogue, which abounds with shrewd and natural humour. The author of "Birdie's Nest" is Miss K. Claremont, a young lady well known in amateur circles for her excellent representations of ingénue and light, comedy parts, who has an evident faculty for dramatic writing. Amongst the amateurs in the piece, exceptional praise is due to Mr. J. A Laffy, who played Copps, the old cabman above referred to, with an appreciation of humour and artistic finish that would have done credit to an experienced actor. Miss E. Weber was an excellent Mrs. Copps and Miss Grace Armytage a sympathetic Birdie.

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The Whittington Dramatic Society gave a most interesting performance on the 13th of December. St. George's Hall was thronged by a brilliant assembly. Before the rise of the curtain an appropriate prologue, specially written for the occasion by Mr. H. D. Greenwood, and soliciting the indulgence of the audience, was spoken by Mr. A. George Hockley. It is a pity that Mr. Hockley could not have dispensed with the MS. of the prologue, as its use weakened the effect of an excellent delivery. It has often been said that the ambition of amateurs has no limits, and that failure is too often the outcome of it. With the memory of the perfect representations of "Charles I." at the Lyceum, one could not help feeling doubtful as to the result, when finding the second act of Mr. W. G. Wills's play as the first item of the evening. Mr. Walter Barnard, as Lord Huntley, had scarcely uttered a few sentences before the word "amateur" seemed to vanish from one's mind. Lord Moray (Mr. F. W. Beasley), and the Queen (Miss Annie Maclean), next appeared, and a feeling of security crept over one. As the scenes unfolded themselves, and Charles (Mr. John Pullman), Cromwell (Mr. Arthur Ayers), Treton (Mr. F. Bacon), came forth in turn, each the fitting part of an admirable picture, even the thought of acting was discarded. An incident of history was being lived

before one; in the face of such an achievement, the most captious and severest critic must cry, "Well done!" Mr. Walter Barnard, Mr. F. W. Beasley, and Mr. F. Bacon filled their parts to perfection; Miss Annie Maclean was interesting and earnest; Mr. Arthur Ayers showed a bluntness and ruggedness quite surprising in one whose special points are generally pathos and tenderness; his Cromwell was excellent. Mr. John Pullman proved himself an actor of great merit, fortunately gifted with a sympathetic voice. His elocution was very good; he was earnest and natural; his Charles was full of dignity. This artistic success was under the management of Mr. R. Markby. "Time Will Tell," an original comedy, in a prologue and two acts, by Herbert Gardner, followed. Limited space prevents my speaking of it at length; but the Whittingtons were evidently fired by the first success of the evening, and acted with rare perfection. One exception I must note—namely, the Duke of Mr. W. T. Clark—which was most conventional and stagey. Mr. Walter Bramall's Lord Fayniant was far in advance of anything I have seen him do yet. Mr. J. Chapman and Mr. W. A. Malony did well in their small parts. Mr. Arthur Ayers was very good as John Carr, a part savouring of Carton in "All for Her." Mr. Walter Barnard treated one to an excellent bit of comedy as Clodworth; and Mr. W. T. Pugh showed a nonchalance and an irresistible spirit, both of which could not have been surpassed. The Count Cyernocski of Mr. C. H. Dickinson was a good performance. I have not seen Miss Annie Woodzell act so well before. With her usual talent, she had less of mannerism, and was far more charming in consequence. Miss Edith Gellibrand was a most bewitching Edith Ravenshaw, playful and affectionate. In the emotional scenes she showed an amount of power quite astonishing in one so young.

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A novelty in the musical line took place on the evening of December 4, at 102, Harley Street, Cavendish Square. Signorina Marie Corelli, gave an "Improvisation"—that is, she undertook to compose, in the presence of her audience, no less than fifteen original pieces; and she most successfully carried out what she had promised. The uncharitable among the audience said she must have planned out her works beforehand, but those who know her well are aware that this is just what she cannot do. She thinks out her subject while at the piano; this could easily be noticed by any one who took the trouble to follow her through her exquisite improvisation to Swinburne's poem, "Madonna Mia," as every verse of the poem had its own special treatment. The names of her subjects are given on her programme simply to guide the minds of her hearers as to what she is thinking about. Her touch is brilliant and her execution marvellous. Considering the physical exertion she went through, and the immense strain on the nerves that it must have been to absorb her whole being into her music as she undoubtedly did, her performance was certainly remarkable. She will no doubt have many cavillers and objectors to her innovation, and she will have much to endure from those who dislike anything new; but she is certain to please an audience, and the enthusiasm with which she was applauded

showed plainly that she had not only excited the sense of wonder, but had also succeeded in touching and awakening the feelings. Mdlle. Corelli is doubly gifted, for she is known favourably to the readers of THE THEATRE by her poems and graceful articles, which have appeared in this magazine from time to time. We heartily wish her every success in both the arduous careers of music and literature in which she has made so promising a beginning.

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The Ivanhoe Dramatic and Musical Club made a very successful appearance in the Peckham Public Hall, on December 10, when they played Clement Scott's one-act drama, "Tears, Idle Tears!" and the late Andrew Halliday's farce, "Checkmate," before a crowded house. The choice of the former piece, which makes powerful demands on the chief actor, was a rather daring one; but, thanks to the ability of Mr. Alfred Byford, who played Wilfred Cumberledge, the courage of the club was justified by the event. Mr. Byford is an amateur of exceptional promise, and showed a remarkable command of pathetic and tragic expression on this occasion. The interest of the play was admirably sustained by him, and the audience followed the story with breathless attention. His support was fairly good, and the rest of the cast showed intelligence and care; but, evidently from nervousness, some of them were uncertain in their words, and frequently "the voice of the—prompter—was heard in the land." In "Checkmate," the amateurs were fairly successful. Miss Annie Brunette, as Charlotte Russe, looked well, and acted with humour and grace, and Mr. Bantick was a fair Sir Everton Toffee; Mr. Lytton, who played Sam Winkle, may have some humour concealed about him, but he was so nervous that it never got a chance of showing itself. On the other hand, Mr. Loraine Cox, who was apparently considered by the audience as the humorist of Peckham, was abundantly confident, and played in exuberant style. "Checkmate" caused great laughter; and altogether the Ivanhoe Club gave a most creditable performance. It may continue its work with every hope of good results. One of the most prominent features of the evening was an enthusiastic orchestra, whose performances were really enjoyable, but whose zeal was not much tempered by discretion. Not only was it difficult to prevail on them to intermit their labours, to allow "Checkmate" to begin, but in "Tears, Idle Tears!" they displayed such enthusiasm in their playing of the incidental music as to reduce the performances on the stage at intervals to "inexplicable dumb-show and"—music.

# THE THEATRE.

## "Becket."

By Frederick Hawkins.

THE brief sentence which serves as a preface to Lord Tennyson's "Becket" is needlessly vague, if not likely to create an erroneous impression. Dedicating the tragedy to the Lord Chancellor, he says that it is "not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of the modern theatre." From these words we might reasonably infer that as yet he has had no idea of causing "Becket" to be publicly represented. Nobody will for a moment suspect him of a desire to mislead us even in what is not to be a matter of literary history; but it is expedient to point out that the suggestion unconsciously conveyed in his epistle to Lord Selborne is quite at variance with the facts. Lord Tennyson, then, has not been insensible to the advantages of having a "Becket" performed under the favourable conditions afforded by Mr. Irving's management. About six years ago, as we stated at the time, it was sent to the Lyceum with a view to its immediate production there. For reasons connected with itself, however, the negotiations came to nothing, and the only piece since written by Lord Tennyson for that theatre has been "The Cup." In a word, therefore, "Becket" was originally intended to meet the exigencies of the modern theatre, but has now assumed a different form. How unsafe it is to construe prefaces very literally an incident lately spoken of will show. Early in the seventeenth century, before literature had become a distinct profession, a gentleman about town proceeded to eke out a slender income by writing for theatres, at the same time sharing a current affectation so far as to give out that he did so only for his own diversion. "I call the players and the printers to witness," he said, in the introduction to his first play, "that I have not sold what they might have been expected to buy." Most

probably, in order to get his name before the public, he had given away the piece in return for the pleasure of seeing it brought out on the stage and as a book. Henceforward he did not disdain to receive remuneration for his work, and would reply to any reproach on the score of his inconsistency by saying that too wide an interpretation had been placed on his words. Lord Tennyson might say the same thing in a different spirit. His statement respecting "Becket" is strictly true, but is open, as we have seen, to a somewhat erroneous construction.

In "Becket," as in "The Cup"—the conclusion of which bears a slight resemblance to that of the younger Corneille's "Camma," so highly praised by Fontenelle—the Laureate has not broken fresh ground. Many a dramatist of old found an attractive theme in the annals of the Court at which Thomas Becket rose and fell. Nearly forty years after Shakspere's death, a "Henry I. and Henry II.," purporting to have been written by him in conjunction with Robert Davenport, was entered in due form on the books of the Stationers' Company. It may be safely assumed that the author of "Macbeth" had had no share in the work, but the escapade of Warburton's famous cook, which led to the destruction of the only copy then extant, deprives us of the means of deciding the question by the light of internal evidence. Possibly with some assistance from Will Mountfort, who signed the dedication, John Bancroft, a surgeon of high repute among the young wits and gallants of his time, produced in 1693 a "Henry II., King of England, with the Death of Rosamund," which, armed with an epilogue by Dryden, was played with success at the Theatre Royal. Betterton here appeared as the King, Mrs. Barry as Eleanor, and Mrs. Bracegirdle as Rosamund—certainly a strong cast. In 1707 Addison made the story the groundwork of one of the earliest examples of opera in England ; but his grace of fancy and charm of style did not compensate the audience for the worthlessness of the music set to it by Clayton. In the course of the century it was twice revived, each time with a new score. William Hawkins, a son of the learned serjeant who wrote on Crown Law, produced a "Henry and Rosamond" in 1749 ; and Thomas Hull, the actor, a "Henry II., or the Fall of Rosamond," in 1773. The former of these pieces was never played, the managers, it is said, being afraid that it would be taken as a satire upon George II. and the Prince of Wales. Shirley, the author of several historical and other

tragedies, wrote a "Henry II." in two parts, but deemed it prudent to keep it to himself. Ireland's too-famous "Vortigern," it may be remembered, was accompanied by a "Henry II." With Hull's play, which appeared at Covent Garden at the end of the season of 1772–3, a curious incident came to be associated. No rival actresses ever hated each other with such intensity of bitterness as a pair who at this period divided the homage of playgoers on one of the Northern circuits—Mrs. Montague and Mrs. Hudson. In 1777, at Hull, the latter put up "Henry II., or the Fall of Rosamond," for her benefit. Mrs. Montague, who had to come forward as the much-injured Queen, pleaded that, owing to illness, she had not been able to master her part, but offered to read it. Mrs. Hudson's friends, in common with most of the audience, at once saw that her object was to destroy the effect of the performance. The house resounded with cries of indignation, particularly when the spiteful actress entered with the book in her hand. Silence having been restored, she was told that "if she did not do the part, as was her duty, of which she had had timely notice, she would have to depart forthwith, for rather than submit to such intentional insult and effrontery they would get the cook-wench from the first alehouse to read it." Mrs. Montague, to do her justice, was a person of high and untamable spirit. "Who's afraid?" she wanted to know. Hereupon the uproar increased. "So," she said, "I am not to be permitted to read the part?" More than a hundred voices united into a tremendous shout of "No!" Then she drew herself up to her full height, hurled the book into the middle of the pit, and, exclaiming "Curse you all!" in the most approved theatrical style, swept off the stage amidst a shower of missiles, laughter, and objurgations.

It is a marked feature of the plays just mentioned that they either exclude or take but slight notice of the commanding figure of Thomas Becket. Lord Tennyson, while making the loves of Henry and Rosamund the pivot on which his plot turns, has, as might be gathered from the title of his tragedy, assigned to the Archbishop the first place among the dramatis personæ, and by doing so has gone far to comply with the demands of both dramatic effect and historical truth. He opens with a prologue analogous in purpose to the allegorical dumb-shows in which the stories of early English plays were foreshadowed for the enlightenment of the audience. Henry and Becket—the latter as yet in a

comparatively humble station—are discovered playing at chess, but with their thoughts straying to the question as to who shall succeed the dying Archbishop of Canterbury. The scene is one of unusual significance and power.

Henry. The Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's time
Hath climb'd the throne and almost clutch'd the crown;
But by the royal customs of our realm
The Church should hold her baronies of me,
Like other lords amenable to law.
I'll have them written down and made the law.
Becket. My liege, I move my bishop.
Henry. And if I live,
No man without my leave shall excommunicate
My tenants or my household.
Becket. Look to your king.
Henry. No man without my leave shall cross the seas
To set the Pope against me—I pray your pardon.
Becket. Well—will you move?
Henry. There. [*Moves.*
Becket. Check—you move so wildly.
Henry. There, then! [*Moves.*
Becket. Why—there then, for you see my bishop
Hath brought your king to a standstill. You are beaten.
Henry. [*Kicks over the board.*]
Why, there then—down go bishop and king together.
I loathe being beaten: had I fixt my fancy
Upon the game I should have beaten thee,
But that was vagabond.
Becket. Where, my liege? With Phryne,
Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or another?
Henry. My Rosamund is no Lais, Thomas Becket;
And yet she plagues me too—no fault in her—
But that I fear the Queen would have her life.
Becket. Put her away, put her away, my liege!
Put her away into a nunnery!
Safe enough there from her to whom thou art bound
By Holy Church. And wherefore should she seek
The life of Rosamund de Clifford more
Than that of other paramours of thine?
Henry. How dost thou know I am not wedded to her?
Becket. How should I know?
Henry. That is my secret, Thomas.
Becket. State secrets should be patent to the statesman
Who serves and loves his king, and whom the king
Loves not as statesman, but true lover and friend.
Henry. Come, come, thou art but deacon, not yet bishop,
No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor yet.
I would to God thou wert, for I should find
An easy father confessor in thee.
Becket. St. Denis, that thou shouldst not. I should beat
Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten it.
Henry. Hell take thy bishop then, and my kingship too!

Soon afterwards the King nominates Becket as Theobald's successor, though the language held by the future prelate is of a

nature to suggest that, whatever the royal ideas on the subject may be, he will strive in his elevation to extend the spiritual at the expense of the civil power. In the same scene he is shown a plan of the bower in which Rosamund is to be secluded. Eleanor, breaking in upon the conversation, catches sight of the paper.

Eleanor. Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done;
Over and gone with the roses,
And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine lasts longer. I would I were in Aquitaine again—your north chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
And never a flower at the close;
Over and gone with the roses,
And winter again and the snows.

That was not the way I ended it first—but unsymmetrically, preposterously, illogically, out of passion, without art—like a song of the people. Will you have it? The last Parthian shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's left breast, and all left-handedness and under-handedness.

And never a flower at the close,
Over and gone with the roses,
Not over and gone with the rose.

True, one rose will out-blossom the rest, one rose in a bower. I speak after my fancies, for I am a Troubadour, you know, and won the violets at Toulouse; but my voice is harsh here, not in tune, a nightingale out of season; for marriage, rose or no rose, has killed the golden violets.

Becket. Madam, you do ill to scorn wedded love.

Eleanor. So I do. Louis of France loved me, and I dreamed that I loved Louis of France; and I loved Henry of England, and Henry of England dreamed that he loved me; but the marriage-garland withers even with the putting on, the bright link rusts with the breath of the first after-marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the ripening of the harvest, and the honeymoon is the gall of love; he dies of his honeymoon. I could pity this poor world myself that it is no better ordered.

Henry. Dead, is he, my Queen? What, altogether? Let me swear nay to that by this cross on thy neck. God's eyes! What a lovely cross! What jewels!

Eleanor. Doth it please you? Take it and wear it on that hard heart of yours—there. [*Gives it to him.*

Henry. [*Puts it on.*] On this left breast before so hard a heart,
To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

Eleanor. Has my simple song set you jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme——

Henry. That the heart were lost in the rhyme and the matter in the metre. May we not pray you, madam, to spare us the hardness of your facility?

Sir Reginald Fitzurse, one of Rosamund's rejected lovers, has accompanied the Queen, who presses him to discover the fair one's retreat, penetrate to her presence, and make her as hateful to herself and the King as she is to the woman she has injured. With this the prologue closes. By the opening of the play itself, Becket is enthroned as Archbishop. From one of his speeches it is clear that his differences with Henry have already begun.

His regard for "God's honour" must rise superior to all other considerations.

> At such an eagle height I stand and see
> The rift that runs between me and the King.
> I served our Theobald well when I was with him
> I served King Henry well as Chancellor:
> I am his no more, and I must serve the Church.
> This Canterbury is only less than Rome,
> And all my doubts I fling from me like dust,
> Winnow and scatter all scruples to the wind,
> And all the puissance of the warrior,
> And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,
> And all the heap'd experiences of life,
> I cast upon the side of Canterbury—
> Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits
> With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons, thro'
> The random gifts of careless kings, have grasp't
> Her livings, her advowsons, granges, farms,
> And goodly acres—we will make her whole:
> Not one rood lost.

Presently the breach widens; the question as to the Constitutions framed by the King for the purpose of resisting ecclesiastical usurpation arises; and Becket, after a curious display of irresolution in the matter, finds it necessary to expatriate himself. Henry's speech in the council scene at Northampton may here be quoted, not only as throwing light on the chief cause of his proposals, but because it may be deemed one of the most impressive in the piece.

> Barons and bishops of our realm of England,
> After the nineteen winters of King Stephen—
> A reign which was no reign, when none could sit
> By his own hearth in peace; when murder common
> As nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had fill'd
> All things with blood; when every doorway blush'd,
> Dash'd red with that unhallow'd passover;
> When every baron ground his blade in blood;
> The household dough was kneaded up with blood;
> The millwheel turned in blood; the wholesome plow
> Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds,
> Till famine dwarft the race. I came, your King!
> Nor dwelt alone, like a soft lord of the East,
> In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools' ears
> The flatteries of corruption—went abroad
> Thro' all my counties, spied my people's ways;
> Yea, heard the churl against the baron—yea,
> And did him justice; sat in mine own courts
> Judging my judges, that had found a King
> Who ranged confusions, made the twilight day,
> And struck a shape from out the vague, and law
> From madness. And the event—our fallows till'd,
> Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm again.
> So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,

Had prospered in the main, but suddenly
Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated
The daughter of his host, and murder'd him.
Bishops—York, London, Chichester, Westminster—
Ye haled this tonsured devil into your courts;
But since your canon will not let you take
Life for a life, ye but degraded him
Where I had hang'd him. What doth hard murder care
For degradation? and that made me muse,
Being bounden by my coronation oath
To do men justice.

Rosamund, to whose bower we are now introduced, intercedes with the King for Becket, but to no purpose. In the scene between them, it is important to remark, Henry presents his mistress with the cross he has received from the Queen. In vain is something like a reconciliation patched up between the King and his refractory Archbishop; the stubbornness of the latter proves insurmountable.

To die for it—
I live to die for it, I die to live for it.
The State will die; the Church can never die;
The King 's not like to die for that which dies;
But I must die for that which never dies.
It will be so—my visions in the Lord:
It must be so, my friend!

Next comes what to many will appear the strongest part of the play. Innocently led by Rosamund's child, Geoffrey, the Queen, accompanied by Fitzurse, who is scarcely a model of all chivalric virtues, gains access to the bower. It is not merely to upbraid her husband's mistress that she does so. Rosamund must die by either the dagger or poison, whichever she chooses. Falling upon her knees, the favourite pleads for her life and that of her son. Eleanor, at the suggestion of Fitzurse, consents to spare both on the intolerable condition that she should give herself to him.

Rosamund. [*Rising.*] I am a Clifford,
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.
I am to die, then, though there stand beside thee
One who might grapple with thy dagger, if he
Had aught of man, or thou of woman; or I
Would bow to such a baseness as would make me
Most worthy of it; both of us will die,
And I will fly with my sweet boy to heaven,
And shriek to all the saints among the stars:
"Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of England!
Murdered by that adulteress Eleanor,
Whose doings are a horror to the east,
A hissing in the west!" Have we not heard
Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle—nay,

> Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own husband's father—
> Nay, even the accursed heathen Saladdeen—
> Strike!
> I challenge thee to meet me before God.
> Answer me there.
> ELEANOR. [*Raising the dagger.*] This in thy bosom, fool,
> And after in thy bastard's!

Becket unexpectedly enters in time to turn aside the blow; Eleanor, after taking possession of the cross given to her intended victim by the King, allows herself to be diverted from her fell purpose, and Rosamund is persuaded by the Archbishop to seek an asylum in the nunnery at Godstow. It is this last circumstance that brings about the catastrophe. Repairing to the King, Eleanor induces him to believe that Rosamund is dead to the world—a pretence confirmed by the production of the cross—and that he has a would-be rival in no less a person than the dreaded prelate himself. Maddened by her words, Henry, like the Henry of history, asks whether nobody will free him from this pestilent priest,—and the scene at Canterbury Cathedral follows. Becket, standing before the altar, meets his doom in a lofty and undaunted spirit. "Ye think," he says, to the four knights—

> Ye think to scare me from my loyalty
> To God and to the Holy Father. No!
> Tho' all the swords in England flash'd above me
> Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours—
> Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets upon earth
> Blared from the heights of all the thrones of her kings,
> Blowing the world against me, I would stand
> Clothed with the full authority of Rome,
> Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,
> First of the foremost of their files, who die
> For God, to people heaven in the great day
> When God makes up his jewels.

"Becket" in its present form is not intended to meet the exigencies of the modern theatre, but we take leave to doubt whether it differs so largely from the first tragedy as the terms of the dedication to Lord Selborne might lead one to suppose. Female interest, which can never be dispensed with in a play to be acted, but is unnecessary in a play written only to be read, has been provided here at the cost of a glaring perversion of history; and it is more than probable that some of the speeches allotted to the lady of the bower were coined with a view to their being uttered on the boards by Miss Ellen Terry. In regard to the merits of the poem, it may be expected to cause a wide diversity of opinion. It will disappoint those who look for dramatic force in even a piece not designed for the stage, since it is deficient in

action, variety, picturesqueness, and other essential qualities of an acting play. It will disappoint those who hold that a dramatist should not bend history to his requirements, since the association of Rosamund with Becket after his consecration is an anachronism which Dumas himself might have envied. It will disappoint those who delight in artful dexterity of plot, since the violation of historical truth is not redeemed by a good involution of the distinct interests of Becket and Rosamund, and the appearance of the former in the labyrinth at the moment when the King's favourite is on the point of being assassinated by the vengeful Queen is a *deus ex machinâ* of the clumsiest kind. For these defects, however, we are not without substantial compensation. Having been present at a private reading of the play in its original form, John Richard Green, who had naturally bestowed particular study upon so important a period of English history as that in question, declared that in "Fair Rosamund"—the title adopted at the outset—the poet embodied a lofty and far-reaching conception of the chief figures at the Court of Henry II. No less praise than this can be awarded to "Becket." Lord Tennyson has not outpainted his picture. Henry, impulsive and passionate, yet endowed with the calculating sagacity of a great statesman; Rosamund, bathed in love for the King, yet not denied the nobility of character to deplore her degradation; Becket, possibly conscious of his obligations to Henry, yet too much of a partisan by nature to serve two masters, and persevering with inflexible will in what he deems to be the path of duty; Eleanor, unscrupulous in her vindictiveness, yet by no means alienated from our sympathies—all these personages stand out with a clearness and force possible only to a great poet. Lord Tennyson might have heightened the effect of his portrait of Becket by indicating the process of thought which converts the soldier into the saint; as it is, we have little more than a suggestion of the former. Apart from a few lines which might be rewritten with advantage, the versification, as may be gathered from the examples here given, is rich in poetry and pleasing in cadence, though some of the songs introduced will not bear comparison with others from the same pen. From a literary point of view, indeed, the tragedy is generally of a high order. It has been reserved for two writers of our time finally to dispose of a once famous dictum that poetic inspiration comes only in youth, or at least not after middle age. Hugo is one; the author of "Becket" is the other.

# Beatrice!

[*On her Betrothal.*]

OUT of the far golden land, where the Spring, like a slumbering maiden,
Smiles in her sleep as she dreams of the sun that shall wake her to pleasure,
Comes a full sound as of lutes with a tender love-melody laden
Thrilling out over the land with the gladness of life in its measure;
Eros, rose-crown'd, floats in light over forest and ocean
Bearing his wide-flaming torch for an altar of bridal devotion.

Beatrice, Comfort of England! Young Joy of its people,
Lay by the lilies of maidenhood,—Love is before thee!
Hark to the bells going mad with their mirth in the steeple!
Cling to the lover who looks in thine eyes to adore thee!
Happiness hallowed thy girlhood, and peace in its perfect completeness,
Greater delight now awaits thee, and stronger, more absolute sweetness.

Come from the side of that Throne where the nations in wonder
Bend to thy Mother's slight hand and acknowledge her splendour,
She whom the multitudes shout for with voices of thunder,
She who is better than mighty in being so tender!
Pitiful ev'n to the poorest, as compassionate sister to brother,
Beatrice! well hast thou honoured so noble, so faithful a mother.

Child of the Nation, be happy! O stately and sweet English lady,
God sends thee now thy reward for thy filial and thorough-souled duty,
List to the warm wedding chimes! And the bridal garlands are ready,
Don the white robes and the jewels and smile in thy womanly beauty,—
Smile and the Spring shall advance from her lily-strewn, crocus-fill'd bowers—
England's blessing upon thee breaks forth with the birth of the flowers!

Marie Corelli.

# The Foyers of the "Minors."

By Charles Hervey.

In this, the concluding paper of the present series, I purpose grouping together the smaller Parisian theatres existing at the period to which my recollections are confined, and not of sufficient importance to form the subject of a separate article. While retaining the familiar heading for the sake of uniformity, I am bound to confess that in this instance it is more than ever inappropriate, my acquaintance with the "foyers" in question being limited to a solitary example, as will be seen hereafter. Indeed I have my doubts whether in one or two cases such an adjunct could have been even contemplated by the architect, the space allotted to the entire edifice hardly warranting any extraordinary consideration for the comfort of the actors; and this consolatory hypothesis furnishing a plausible excuse for my own shortcomings, it would be sheer waste of time to inquire further into the matter.

If we begin our round by the Boulevard du Temple—a very different locality, by the way, from what it was five-and-thirty years ago—we shall find ourselves in the midst of what was then the focus of popular drama, where, as soon as evening sets in, the intervening expanse between the northern side of the wide thoroughfare and the carriage road was thronged with a motley assemblage of playgoers, idlers, and fruit-vendors, attracted thither by the glare of the lamps illuminating the entrances of some six or eight theatres, before each of which a *queue* was rapidly forming. Among these, few were more liberally patronized than the Folies Dramatiques, then under the management of Mourier, as able and intelligent an impresario as any in Paris, who, until his death in 1857, steadily pursued the two objects of his ambition—namely, to please the public and make his own fortune—and succeeded in both. Even after the disastrous days of 1848 he contrived to hold his own, and, when applied to by his colleagues to sign a petition imploring the aid of Government, refused to do so, saying that he had no need of help, for while the other theatres

had barely covered a fraction of their expenses, he had gained thirty thousand francs in the course of the year.

His two leading actresses were Mdlle. Angelina Legros and Mdlle. Judith, the former chiefly excelling in travesti parts, and the latter already giving promise of a budding talent destined ultimately to enrol her among the sociétaires of the Comédie Française. When the question of her engagement at the "Maison de Molière" was discussed by the committee, some of the members demurred, on the ground that it would be derogatory to their august body to accept a recruit from so very minor a theatre as the Folies Dramatiques ; whereupon it was politely intimated to the lady that previous to her admission into the sanctum, she must perforce undergo a twelvemonth's apprenticeship at the Variétés. "*Pour quoi pas ?*" laughingly replied Mdlle. Judith. "*Je comprends que, pour arriver au paradis, il faut d'abord passer par le purgatoire.*"

Several actors, who have since risen in grade, began their career with M. Mourier, among others Christian, the best *grognard* of his day, whom I remember figuring in a "Scottisch" with an ex-celebrity of the Grande Chaumière, Clara Fontaine, immortalized by Nadaud, and tempted in an evil hour, under the name of Anaïs Miria, to transport her choregraphic eccentricities to the boards of the Folies ; the Protean Brasseur, Heuzey of the Variétés, and Calvin of the Palais Royal. Besides these, I may mention, as especial favourites of the local public, two very droll *farceurs*, Coutard and Palaiseau, and the charming Virginie Duplessy, who, in a parody of "La Dame aux Camélias" called "La Dame aux Gobéas," gave so ludicrous an imitation of Madame Doche that her promotion to the Vaudeville soon after surprised nobody. In 1862, when the formation of the Boulevard du Prince Eugène, and the consequent disappearance of the dramatic element from its ancient stronghold, had become an accomplished fact, this theatre re-opened on its present site ; and, abandoning its original specialty for comic opera, inaugurated its new career with "l'Œil Crevé," "Chilpéric," and "le petit Faust." How it subsequently outdid all its former triumphs by the unprecedented run of "La Fille de Madame Angot" is hardly within the range of these recollections ; and, not to break through a rule I have hitherto scrupulously observed, I close them here.

Adjoining the Folies Dramatiques stood the Délassements

Comiques, or Délass. Com., as it was more unceremoniously styled, a smaller and less ambitious establishment than its immediate neighbour, but amusing enough on the whole. The readers of The Theatre are already sufficiently acquainted with its original founder, Plancher Valcour, nor is even a passing reference to his various successors likely to interest them; three or four members of the company, however, must not be dismissed quite so cavalierly. One of the staple commodities of the Délassements being its annual *revue*, a descriptive panorama of all the novelties of the past year, a very essential personage in this species of entertainment was the *compère*, a patient and much enduring individual whose office it was to be always on the stage, and to listen *sans murmurer*, as Scribe has it, to the different candidates for celebrity one after the other. Leclère used to be selected for this duty at the Variétés, and Sainville at the Palais Royal. I will not say that Emile Viltard equalled either in drollery, but he certainly possessed an advantage over them in the shape of a swivel eye, so that if two competitors were "on" at the same time, you never knew exactly which he was looking at. His chief male colleagues were a low comedian bearing the singular patronymic of Sagedieu and Sévin, a really good actor, who in the three days' *émeute* of June, 1848, was unfortunately shot dead while storming a barricade. Alphonsine, whom we have seen by turns in every vaudeville theatre, reigned here for a while, a triton among minnows, of which latter category Céleste Mogador of Mabille notoriety may be cited as a specimen. She was about as bad an actress as even the traditional Carpentras or Brives-la-Gaillarde ever boasted, and, being strongly marked with the small-pox, had not even a pretty face to recommend her; previous to her marriage with Count de Chabrillan she published her memoirs in five volumes, which have long since become the undisputed property of the trunk-liner.

Close by were the Funambules, almost exclusively devoted to the specialty of Gallic pantomime; a smoke-dried and dingy little theatre, but well worth a visit nevertheless—particularly during the lifetime of that incomparable Pierrot, the elder Déburau. Those who only remember his son and Paul Legrard—both remarkably clever in their way—can form but a faint idea of their unrivalled predecessor, who combined all the grace and *finesse* of the old Italian *mime* with an irresistible comicality peculiarly his own. He

was literally adored by the populace; and the most eminent literary men in Paris did not disdain to while away an hour in the enjoyment of so perfectly unique a spectacle. Charles Nodier and Théophile Gautier might frequently be seen among the closely packed audience; Janin was indebted to him for the subject of one of his liveliest works; and the realistic Champfleury not only extolled his merits in the amusing "Souvenirs des Funambules," but even deigned to contribute a pantomime to the repertory, bearing the lugubrious title of "Pierrot, valet de la Mort." It is but fair to add that both he and his successors were excellently supported by Laplace as Cassandre, and by Vauthier as Polichinelle; nor could one desire a prettier or more engaging Columbine than Mdlle. Béatrix.

Of all the theatres it has ever been my lot to enter, the smallest, dirtiest, and cheapest, was undeniably the Petit Lazari, a *bouig-bouig* mainly frequented by the working classes, who for the trifling outlay of three sous enjoyed the privilege of a seat in the gallery, and revelled in melodrama from seven P.M. till midnight. A single visit to this scantily-lit and ill-ventilated resort amply satisfied my curiosity; and on that occasion, having secured a place in a proscenium box for sevenpence-halfpenny, I arrived just in time to witness the first performance of a novelty entitled "Les Conseils de Dieu." This, I soon discovered, was palpably a plagiarism from "Victorine," an old Adelphi triumph of Mrs. Yates, with the addition of two murders and a suicide, evidently much to the taste of the pit, which was almost exclusively occupied by soldiers of the line. The principal actor appeared to be the prompter, whose voice in most of the scenes was the only audible one; the *premier rôle*, a bandy-legged individual, with an unfortunate penchant for the prevailing American weakness, and the heroine, who was supposed—no one knew why—to be in the last stage of exhaustion after a fifty-miles' journey on foot, in a pair of smart slippers with red bows, having clearly bestowed very little time or trouble on the study of their parts. The audience seemed to take this as a matter of course; and whenever a longer pause than usual occurred, or the interest betrayed symptoms of flagging, enlivened the proceedings with a patriotic chorus which, once started, broke out afresh at irregular intervals until the fall of the curtain.

A few doors eastward was the Cirque, then devoted to military

spectacle, with the inevitable apotheosis at the close. "Murat" was a piece greatly in vogue, supported by the leading members of the company, including Gauthier and his wife (a sister of Bouffé), Chéri-Louis, and an amusing low comedian called Lebel. The "foyer"—for in this instance my title is justified by my having twice had free access "behind"—was neither more nor less bare and gloomy than those previously described; the approach to it, however, was curious enough, it being reached by a long stone passage, on one side of which was a row of stalls for the accommodation of the horses destined to figure on the mimic battle-field. Some years later, the talented young painter, Eustache Lorsay, twice tried his hand here as a dramatist, and produced successively "Charles the Twelfth" and the "Maréchal de Villars;" in the former of which Taillade, a clever but unequal actor, personated the Swedish monarch. I forget at what theatre or in what piece this same Taillade found himself in a very embarrassing predicament, his part requiring him to carry the *jeune première* off the stage in a fainting state, at the close of an intensely moving scene. The lady in question, Mdlle. Suzanne Lagier, being enormously stout, and defying all his efforts to lift her from the ground, he was heroically striving to drag her along with him in the direction of "O. P.," when a *titi* in the gallery, perceiving his dilemma, compassionately suggested the following novel but not altogether practicable expedient: "Don't hurry yourself," he cried. "Take half at once, and come back for the rest!"

On the opposite side of the Boulevard, light operettas and chansonnettes formed the usual fare provided for the patrons of the Folies Nouvelles. By these—mostly recruited from the *gommeux* of the period—it was considered the *acme* of *chic* to lounge gracefully in a stall, armed with sticks of barley-sugar, flavoured with absinthe,—baskets containing which were perpetually handed round by trimly dressed damsels—and to suck them with becoming gravity, while listening to the "Compositeur toque" of Hervé and the "Sire de Framboisy" of Joseph Kelm. A few years later, the little theatre coming under the management of a son of Mdlle. Dejazet, he gave it his mother's name; and one of the last creations of that inimitable actress was "M. Garat," the first stepping-stone to celebrity of a then unknown author, now familiar to us as Victorien Sardou.

On the same side of the way, a few doors from the Place de la

Bastille, the Théâtre Beaumarchais supplied the inhabitants of the Marais with a constant succession of dramas, hastily got up, and imperfectly rehearsed ; a weekly change of programme being regarded as a *sine quâ non* by the audience, who were for the most part yearly subscribers, and occupied the same seats night after night. The only piece I ever saw there worthy of record was "Aline Patin," by the actor Pierron, in which a bright little soubrette Mdlle. Potel, made her *début*, and was ere long snapped up by the manager of the Variétés.

Of the Théâtre du Luxembourg, familiarly spoken of as Bobino, and its rival the Théâtre Cluny, a very brief mention will suffice ; both, from their situation in the heart of the Quartier Latin, were chiefly frequented by the students and their accompanying grisettes. The former, thanks to Mdlle. Caroline Grigny, an actress far too good for her surroundings, had generally a balance in its favour at the close of the season ; and the latter obtained a temporary vogue during the last years of the Empire, with "Les Inutiles," an excellently written comedy by a young author of the name of Cadol. As for the Athénée, I am indebted for my pleasantest recollection of that miniature "bonbonnière" to a gay and sparkling operetta called "Une Folie à Rome," in which Paris first discovered what an admirable artist it possessed in Mdlle. Marimon.

The last and most popular theatre on my list, the Bouffes Parisiens, owes its existence in its present shape to Jacques Offenbach, by whom it was inaugurated chiefly for the performance of his own compositions exactly thirty years ago. I remember it as the Théâtre des Jeunes Elèves, under the direction of Comte, son of the once famous conjuror, and serving as a preparatory school for young actors, several of whom—and I may particularly instance Colbrun and Mdlle. Alphonsine—have since made their mark. In the spring of 1855, Comte having abdicated in favour of Offenbach, the latter, while the theatre in the Passage Choiseul was undergoing the necessary renovation, migrated with his newly engaged company to the Salle Lacaze (afterwards Folies Marigny) in the Champs Elysées, and commenced his campaign triumphantly with "Les Deux Aveugles," admirably interpreted by Pradeau and Berthelier. At first, the number of actors allowed to appear on the stage at the same time was restricted to three, but was soon increased to four, and ultimately to as many as the piece required. The baritone, Darcier, a brother of the delightful

singer of the Opéra Comique, and Mdlle. Macé, who married Montrouge of the Palais Royal, proved valuable recruits; and last, not least, Hortense Schneider, then a comparatively unknown beginner, carried all before her in "Tromb-al-Cazar."

Offenbach's personal superintendence of the Bouffes Parisiens lasted for seven years, during which many of his liveliest productions first saw the light—among others, "Ba-ta-Clan," "La Chatte metamorphosée en femme," composed expressly for a very pleasing singer, Mdlle. Lise Tautin, who died young, and "Orphée aux Enfers." The last-named happy inspiration, the cast of which included the excellent Désiré, and Mdlle. Cico, the future prima donna of the Opéra Comique, kept possession of the stage for more than two hundred nights, and has since been frequently revived with undiminished success; on one of these occasions, the part of Cupid was sustained by a notorious celebrity of the "demi-monde," in a diaphanous costume looped up by fourteen magnificent diamonds, an exhibition of audacious incapacity which the audience, much to their credit, indignantly declined to sanction.

Under the pseudonym of "M. de St. Remy," the Count de Morny produced an amusing trifle called "M. Choufleury restera chez lui le—" which, by desire of the Prince President, was shortly after performed at the Elysée, the best available accommodation in the shape of dressing-rooms being provided for the actors. One of these, a queer original named Bache, dissatisfied with the quarters assigned him, so far forgot himself as to button-hole M. de Morny and request that his room might be changed, and a bottle of wine brought from the cellar for his refection.

"*Good* wine, mind," he added, turning to a servant who happened to be standing by, "the same that you keep for your own private drinking."

In 1869, the "Princesse de Trebizonde," (originally played at the Baden theatre) introduced to the Bouffes Parisiens a new attraction in the person of Celine Chaumont, whose exquisite "Quand je suis sur la corde raide" still lingers in my memory as one of the most delicious bits of melody I ever heard; and this brings my reminiscences to their allotted term. It seems hard to close them without even a passing word of homage to the siren Judic; but although I cannot say with the song, "she was not born till arter that," yet as her triumphs at this theatre belong rather to a republican than an imperial era, I cannot consistently

record them here. An anecdote however, indirectly concerning her, may serve as an *amende* for the enforced omission.

While dining at a café in Brussels, shortly after her starring visit to that city, an item in the bill of fare, "Salade à la Judic," struck me as a novelty, and was strongly recommended by the waiter as being concocted according to the actress's own recipe.

"The best salad maker in Europe," he added, in a tone of profound conviction.

"If her salade is as good as her 'Timbale,'" I remarked, "there won't be much fault to find with it."

"Quant à la timbale, monsieur," replied the waiter, "je n'en sais rien; je n'aime pas le macaroni, moi. Mais pour la salade, j'en réponds, *savez vous?*"

# Mr. Irving's Second American Tour.

Chicago, *January* 8, 1885.

THE most enthusiastic native of this city would scarcely maintain that Chicago appeals at first sight to a sense of beauty. I say this with some diffidence, for when you talk of a sense of beauty in this country you run the risk of being derided as a disciple of Oscar Wilde. Chicago is a large city; the streets are wide; the public buildings are, in point of size, imposing; the principal hotels are in themselves great towns; there are abundant indications of the material resources and energy of the citizens. And all this is the creation of the last thirteen years. The cities which spring up in a night in Arabian fairy tales are scarcely more wonderful than Chicago, which has arisen from the ashes of a great fire in a space of time that barely suffices to add a few streets to many a city in the Old World. This is Chicago's chief glory; perhaps it will pale in the course of the next generation or two, when Americans have lost somewhat of the elasticity of youth, and crave for the finnikin refinements so highly prized by effete nations. At present everybody who looks for natural

charms must let his eye rove over the bosom of Lake Michigan when it is not wrapt in mist. He may find some satisfaction too in the open country, which still bears a kind of resemblance to the great prairie, though he will not see the Indians and buffaloes, so precious in the stories that charmed our boyhood; and though he may not meet Rosalie, the Prairie Flower. After this he may put a volume of Ruskin in his pocket, and betake himself to the town of Pullman, where the enterprising inventor of the cars in which you can eat, drink, and sleep, marry, die, or be born, has pitched his tent. This visit may prepare your mind for a richer joy. "When you are in Chicago," said my American friend to me a fortnight ago, "don't fail to see the place where the pigs go in at one door, and come out sausages at another. It will be the greatest treat of your life." I feel that I need some preparation for this treat. I am not fit for it yet. "From the tablets of my memory I must wipe away all trivial fond records," that this experience of the pig factory "may live alone within the book and volume of my brain unmixed with baser matter." With a mind quite free from the cobwebs of musty associations, I may see the happy, thoughtless pig enter the portal of his doom, and emerge in the shape of the appetising sausage and the succulent ham.

Let us turn back to the point where I left the story of our wanderings last month. It is not a far cry from New York to Philadelphia, and yet two cities could not be more unlike. New York is cosmopolitan; the City of Brotherly Love, or the City of Homes, as it is sometimes called, is proud of its traditions, and indifferent to the opinions of the outer world. Indeed, every American city has its peculiar individuality; and the cities of early Greece could not have been more jealous of one another than are these great communities in the American Union. The distinctive characteristics of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia have been pleasantly summarized by some anonymous humorist. Boston wants to hear what you know; New York what money you have; Philadelphia what your family is. This is supplemented by a Boston jest at the expense of Philadelphia. A Philadelphian said to a Bostonian, "Why are your streets so crooked? Why are they not level and well laid out, like Philadelphia?" To which the Bostonian retorted, "When Boston is as dead as Philadelphia, I hope it will be as well laid out."

The City of Homes is by no means dead. Its regular streets are filled with a cheerful bustle. Some of its buildings are the handsomest I have seen in this country; several of the banks especially show a tasteful fancy in design which is a very pleasant break in the monotony of street architecture. Of the new Courts of Justice and the Post Office any city might be proud. But the most interesting building is Independence Hall, from a window of which the famous Declaration was read. Here are treasured curious relics of the Revolution. A portrait of Washington, in odd proximity to Paul Jones, the famous commander, whom it pleased Englishmen in those days to call a pirate, because they could not catch him; portraits of other heroes of the Revolution and their French allies; the chairs occupied by the thirteen delegates at the first Congress, and the chair and table of the President of the Congress, General Hancock; a great many mementoes, in the shape of old flint locks, rusty swords, fragments of uniforms, boots and slippers, and—a very elegant pair of stays! To whose charming figure these may have belonged, history sayeth not; and your mind can only lose itself in agreeable speculation. Another inspiring relic is the old Liberty Bell which sounded the tocsin of independence in that historic time which, after all, does not seem a very remote past. If any Briton should feel uneasy in this exhibition, he ought to derive some comfort from the inscription in gilt letters of an extract from Bancroft's "History of America." This is the tribute to Lord Chatham: "America's great friend in need, who showed that the true spirit of England, which had grown great by freedom, was on the side of America." Almost as curious as this collection are the relics in the office of Mr. G. W. Childs, the liberal and energetic proprietor of the Philadelphia *Ledger*, a journal which is one of the phenomena of the American newspaper enterprise. Mr. Childs sits in the midst of a perfect museum, and the visitor is soon absorbed in a medley of pictures, old furniture, Washington's chair, Abraham Lincoln's chair, rare books, a portrait of Sarah Bernhardt, painted (indifferently) by herself, and endless minutiæ of treasures beyond all price. These are but a small part of Mr. Childs's possessions, for he has a library and a collection of original manuscripts that would tempt the most virtuous bibliophile to commit larceny. One of his relics, a champagne glass that belonged to Washington, was presented by Mr. Childs to Mr. Irving. I mention this fact,

because it will send pangs of envy through the breasts of all the collectors who may hear of it.

People who think that the wishes of pious founders ought always to be respected, will be interested in Girard College, the donor of which is said to have left strict injunctions that no clergyman was to have anything to do with the institution, and that the college was to be surrounded by a wall twenty feet high, which little eccentricities are doubtless scrupulously reverenced by the trustees. At another college in Philadelphia is carried on an educational work which is unique. The Lincoln Institute is devoted to the training of Indian girls. You meet them in the street, walking in procession, and looking very far from picturesque, in civilized attire. They are said to have a strong antipathy to petticoats and clean linen ; and, rather than change their clothing, they will often put the clean garments set out for them over those they have been wearing. This survival of primitive habits may prove too strong for educational influence. I should say that the best instruction would be given by letting these girls walk daily through a haberdasher's shop. Their savage breasts might be charmed by the display of feminine garb. There is a big store in Philadelphia, the proprietor of which is a kind of American Whiteley. At Wanamaker's you may buy all manner of things, and his advertisements are a peculiar refreshment to the mind. Wanamaker is specially proud of his cheap books. He will give you a whole set of Dickens handsomely bound for twenty-five shillings. "England," he says, "has been the book country of all the world," a graceful compliment, though what follows is not quite so gratifying. "The fiction that we get in quarto papers for ten or twenty cents. and in books at fifty, first appears in England in three-volume editions at a guinea!" So it does, and Wanamaker is triumphant. "England is welcome to write. We read. Why we have a ton and a half of Dickens alone for Christmas, and more to come." The English author, who is an involuntary contributor to these tons of literature, may not entirely appreciate this invitation to go on writing ; but the cheery benevolence of Mr. Wanamaker ought to be a wholesome corrective to any predatory instincts that may still linger in the Indian girls at the Lincoln Institute. I did not observe that there were tons of American literature at Wanamaker's, but this was probably an oversight. Not to mention

Hawthorne and Washington Irving, there is Mr. Ignatius Donolly, who has written a book to prove finally that Bacon wrote Shakespeare. There ought to be at least a ton of this in the Philadelphia book-store.

If Philadelphia had nothing to boast of but her park, she might hold her head high. Fairmount Park is a great testimony to the determination of the citizens of Philadelphia to save one of their rivers, the Schulkyll, from pollution; so, for at least ten miles, the banks of the river remain as Nature left them, uncontaminated by chimneys. This enterprise ought to be a lesson to other countries, where the pollution of streams has become a great public evil. Of course in Pennsylvania people have exceptional facilities for turning large tracts of land into parks. The founders of Philadelphia were naturally tempted by the immense space at their command to dream of a very large city indeed; and I believe that, as a matter of fact, its area is greater than that of London. There are many illustrations in America of the ambition of pioneers; and if Philadelphia has not yet fulfilled the anticipations of those who marked out her boundaries, she may expect that her growing population, which is already more than a million, will in time fill all her borders with restless life.

Mr. Irving's engagement in Philadelphia was another proof that although this is a disastrous time for theatrical business generally in the States, he still maintains a strong hold upon the American public. The whole round of plays was received with great favour, and here, as in New York and Boston, "Twelfth Night" was specially attractive, and Miss Terry's triumph unequivocal. But perhaps the greatest impression on a Philadelphia audience was made by Mr. Irving one night after the play, when he was entertained at the Journalists' Club, and recited the "Dream of Eugene Aram." The novelty and intensity of this performance caused an extraordinary sensation. From another entertainment, the Clover Club dinner, Mr. Irving was unavoidably absent. This club may lay a very strong claim to original character. It has no local habitation; but the members dine together once a month, and pass the time in a manner which is no small surprise to any one accustomed to the formality of English dinners. In a charming room in the Hotel Bellevue, the tables are arranged in the form of a clover leaf, and a great tree of clover rises from the middle to the ceiling. The youngest member of the club, who is

called the "Baby," is expected to sit in a high chair, and play with a rattle. It is also his duty to bear the loving cup to the president, from whom it passes round the table at a very early stage of the proceedings; each guest as he rises to drink, being received with hearty acclamations. Much to my astonishment on this particular evening, somebody rose and made a speech immediately after the soup. Then a popular member of the club, who had been unfortunate in the late election, stood up to receive a raking fire of banter from his audience. The entrance of the waiters with the mutton provoked a ballad, sung by the entire company, after which a general cry of "Now!" was followed by the silence of a general drink. Then there were more speeches, fitful bursts of melody, everybody singing when the spirit moved him, with the certainty that the ditty would be taken up by the whole table. The refreshing absence of ceremony made the dinner convivial without being noisy—a pleasant contrast to some solemn repasts at which two hours of dull feeding are followed by an hour of heavy platitudes.

I can never think of Pittsburgh without being reminded of a recent anecdote of Kansas city. An opera company was performing the "Bohemian Girl," and when the gipsy queen was shot, a judge rose in the middle of the audience, and solemnly protested against this incident. The citizens of Kansas, he said, objected to the shooting of a local favourite; moreover, the use of firearms on the stage was calculated to revive those lawless sentiments from which Kansas city was at last happily free. The manager of the company came promptly before the curtain, and promised that the "Bohemian Girl" should be revised without delay, and the objectionable shooting struck out. Then the local favourite appeared in a street costume of brown, and sang "Some Day," to show her admirers that she was still alive. I should fancy that such an episode would not be wholly impossible in Pittsburgh, where the general idea of dramatic art is not unduly exalted; though, according to the local journals, the audiences are distinguished for culture and social brilliancy. Everybody who heard that Mr. Irving intended to visit this city, shrugged his shoulders, and made other signs of compassion. It was impossible, we were told, to wear a white shirt for half an hour. Soot fell in flakes, and day was turned into night. To spend Christmas in Pittsburgh was declared to be the direst form

of martyrdom. All this turned out to be somewhat exaggerated, though nobody who has once visited Pittsburgh can ever have any desire to go there again. Soot did not fall in flakes ; the atmosphere was, on the whole, surprisingly clear ; but some subtle influence in the air made it impossible to keep clean very long. We seemed to spend part of the time in washing, and the rest in talking about it. Englishmen in Pittsburgh are apparently regarded by a section of the population as a strange variety of the human family, and their appearance in a hotel was enough to strike the whole staff with paralysis. The dinner which Mr. Irving gave the company on Christmas Eve is not likely to be forgotten. It was a lesson in good humour under difficulties, owing to the unwillingness of the negro waiters to bring what was wanted, and their zeal in whisking it off the table as soon as it arrived. David Copperfield was not more wronged by the landlady, who said, "Take care of that boy, or he'll burst!" when his dinner had been eaten by the insinuating waiter, than were the members of the Lyceum company by the commemoration of this feast in the newspapers. But it was a merry evening. The gaiety of the host was infectious ; and the songs and dances, notably the sword-dance of Mr. Norman Forbes and the twinkling heels of Mr. Mellish, threw the sable onlookers into greater wonder than ever. The Englishman may take his pleasures sadly at home, but abroad he can be really gay, even in Pittsburgh. Besides, was there not the grand discovery that a former cook of the Garrick Club had set up a chop-house, where chops and beer, not to be surpassed at the Cock Tavern, regaled the spirits who yearned for their native country at this festive season? Beshrew me, but there are worse places than Pittsburgh in the world, and one need not be an absolute Mark Tapley to find a fund of cheerfulness in this forest of chimneys. The mere spectacle of ten negroes trying to move a waggon off a tramway-track, while nearly all the traffic of the city was suspended, would prevent the most melancholy of men from yielding altogether to gloom.

The difference between Cleveland and Pittsburgh is one of those violent contrasts which you find everywhere in America. Cleveland is a pretty city, and the people are singularly sympathetic. If Mr. Irving's brief stay had been extended to twice the duration, the theatre, which is one of the best in the country,

would have been thronged at every performance. So said some of the citizens, who were not content with so small an allowance as the "Merchant of Venice," "Much Ado About Nothing," and "Louis XI." The taste to appreciate such dramatic representations, and the candour to admit their merit, are not always found in conjunction; but Cleveland was not restrained by any patriotic scruples from testifying heartily and ungrudgingly to the artistic profit it had derived from this engagement. It is more than doubtful whether Shakespeare, when presented with less finish and completeness than distinguish Mr. Irving's productions, will henceforth receive in Cleveland a particularly cordial welcome. Of this city we shall always cherish vivid memories—of the fine avenue which is called after Euclid, though it has no *Pons Asinorum;* of the military guard which still keeps watch over the tomb of President Garfield; of the thirty amateur actors who sat in judgment upon Mr. Irving's "Louis" on the first night. I also remember a youthful barber, who could not have been more than sixteen, and who said he began the art of shaving at the age of nine—a statement which caused his customers to suffer from temporary trepidation. No wonder that cities rise like magic in America, when small boys make a livelihood with the razor. The new hotel in Cleveland must not be forgotten, for the friends of the æsthetic movement will rejoice to hear that in the Stillman House there are no carpets, that severely simple rugs decorate the polished floors, and that the mantelpieces are worthy of Bedford Park.

Detroit is even more striking in construction than Cleveland. A better built and better paved city we have not yet seen in the country. People who have made tentative efforts to light some parts of London by electricity will be interested to know that Detroit, like most American cities, has solved this problem, and that electric lights, which look like constellations, shed a brilliant radiance from skeleton iron pillars rising to a great height. These structures are supported by a single stem, which is probably safe enough, though it might be too fairy-like for the Metropolitan Board of Works. In striking contrast to all this enterprise, is Windsor, which lies on the Canadian side of the Detroit river. Windsor was a municipality before Detroit, and yet it looks little better to-day than a backwoods settlement. Most of the houses are of wood; the pavements are chiefly planks; the roads

nothing but cart-tracks. There is an air of impromptu throughout the place, an air, too, of impoverishment and apathy. It is unfortunate for an Englishman's pride that he should pass from American territory to this point of Canadian soil, and it is doubly unfortunate that such a spirit-forsaken spot should be called Windsor. In Detroit there is every indication of prosperity, except the aspect of the citizen who forlornly rings a bell outside a "dining-hall," where you are offered a luxurious meal for fifteen cents. In Windsor—to adopt Dr. Johnson's jest against Scotland—the only decent prospect is the highway to the United States.

We are half-way through the tour now, and all that can be said by way of criticism and commentary on the performances of the Lyceum company seems to be pretty well exhausted. Such a field for the employment of critical ingenuity has never been presented to American writers about the stage; but the man who can say a new thing of Mr. Irving and Miss Terry is not forthcoming, even in this land of surprises. A study of all that has been written of these two artists gives one a fine idea of the range and complexity of the human mind, and if Mr. Irving had done nothing else, he would live in stage history as the actor who racked the brains of critics as they were never racked before. But all this has not made the public weary of the acting. A writer in the Philadelphia *Ledger* said of Miss Terry that she taught the lesson so many actresses failed to learn—that of never exhausting a situation. And it may be said of the general effect of Mr. Irving's personality and dramatic organization that it leaves the public unsatiated. More than this, it disinclines intelligent playgoers in America for the kind of entertainment which presents the crudest elements of the drama. For some time past many theatrical managers in the States have felt the pressure of misfortune. They attribute it to a general depression, which is as inevitable periodically as an atmospheric wave, and expatiate on the necessity of cutting down expenses. That the people have got higher ideals of dramatic art, that they have learned that the drama is a compact whole, not a loose framework for one or two artists to bustle in, that they are therefore indifferent to the enterprises which proceed upon the old lines—all this is not as yet clearly understood by the American managers, though the lesson is preached to them by the example now in their midst, and made

the text of countless essays in their own journals. Mr. Irving does not feel the general depression which has covered the country with the fragments of broken companies, and filled the papers with columns of lamentation from the sufferers. Nor can his exceptional position be ascribed to curiosity, for mere curiosity must have been pretty well exhausted by his first tour. The truth lies on the surface, and the managers who can learn to profit by it will reap a harvest the like of which they have never known. But though they have got the seed, it will take some time to grow the flower.

It is difficult to believe that here in Chicago we are a thousand miles from New York, and yet that the West—what Americans call the West—stretches ever so far away. New York seems quite a remote speck in our experience—if I may be pardoned for calling the Empire City a speck; though it is needless to look for absolution here when you cannot write a line which in some eyes does not fill up the cup of your misdoing at once. It is like a dream to me that, on the last night in New York, I saw a little man with brilliant eyes and a frame quivering with vitality, who was no other than Du Chaillu, whose gorillas were amongst the delights of boyhood's happy hours. Still in harness, the famous explorer had but recently returned from Lapland, and American boys will read with fearful joy more of the graphic pages that many of us remember so well. Did I really hear a certain professor tell a droll story about a quadratic equation? Then that tale of the grave and reverend seigniors of the Supreme Court who frolicked in the Twelfth Night carnival, and were afterwards found discussing a point of law, quite oblivious of the punchinello caps on their heads! This convinces me that I must have dreamt it all in a sleeping car, and that it was high time we came to Chicago, where every one is wide awake, and there is no scope whatever for fantastic visions.

# Our Musical-Box.

## "THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE; OR, THE SLAVE OF DUTY."

An entirely Original Melodramatic Opera, in Two Acts, written by W. S. Gilbert, composed by Arthur Sullivan.
Represented, for the first time, at the Royal Bijou Theatre, Paignton, on Tuesday, December 30, 1879.
Produced at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, on Wednesday, December 31, 1879.
Produced, for the first time in London, at the Opera Comique, on Saturday, April 25, 1880.
Acted, entirely by children, at the Savoy Theatre, on Tuesday afternoon, December 23, 1884.
[All four productions being under the management of Mr. R. d'Oyly Carte.]

| | *Paignton.* | *New York.* | *Opera Comique.* | *Savoy.* |
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| Major-General Stanley ... | Mr. R. Mansfield. | Mr. J. H. Ryley. | Mr. G. Grossmith. | Master E. Percy. |
| The Pirate King ... ... | Mr. Federici. | Mr. Brocolini. | Mr. R. Temple. | Master S. Adeson. |
| Samuel ... ... | Mr. Lackner. | Mr. F. Cook. | Mr. G. Temple. | Master W. Pickering. |
| Frederick ... | Mr. Cadwallader. | Mr. H. Talbot. | Mr. G. Power. | Master H. Tebbutt. |
| Sergeant of Police... ... | Mr. Billington. | Mr. Clifton. | Mr. Barrington. | Master C. Adeson. |
| Mabel ... ... | Miss Petrelli. | Miss B. Roosevelt. | Miss M. Hood. | Miss Elsie Joel. |
| Edith ... ... | Miss May. | Miss N. Bond. | Miss J. Gwynne. | Miss Alice Vicat. |
| Kate ... ... | Miss Monmouth. | Miss Brandram. | Miss La Rue. | Miss Eva Warren. |
| Isabel ... ... | Miss K. Neville. | Miss Barlow | Miss N. Bond. | Miss F. Montrose. |
| Ruth ... ... | Miss F. Harrison. | Miss A. Barnett. | Miss E. Cross. | Miss G. Esmond. |

PERHAPS the most triumphant confutation of the Continental postulate, "The English are not a musical people," ever advanced by any native-born caterer for the British musical public was that put forward by Mr. D'Oyly Carte when he produced "The Pirates of Penzance" at the Savoy Theatre with an exclusively juvenile company. We are told that the child is father to the man, and, by inference, mother to the woman. Admitting the correctness of this axiom, we may accept the half hundred children whose singing at the Savoy has been the wonder and admiration of London during the past month, as no less adequate representatives of their country than if they were all grown up and had families of their own. I think I may venture to say that I am not a rabid patriot in connection with matters artistic, or wilfully blind to the shortcomings of my compatriots as regards musical cultivation or taste: perhaps because I have lived nearly half my life abroad, and have consequently enjoyed opportunities accorded to few Englishmen of ridding myself of insular prejudices. As, moreover, my long sojourn upon the Continent teemed with musical events and experiences, it entitles me to a certain extent to draw comparisons between the innate musical capacities of foreign and English folk; and, in the exercise of that right, real or imaginary, I desire to record my conviction that such a rendering of a comic opera as that given by the Savoy children, under the direction of Messrs. F. Cellier and R. Barker, has never within my remembrance been achieved by any German, French, or Italian company. These miniature mummers are living and indefeasible proofs of the disputed musicality of the English nation; for they are by no means "infant wonders," but average children judiciously selected from some hundreds of youthful candidates for employment, belonging in part to the mysterious little world that is peopled by hangers-on to the dramatic pro-

fession, and in part to the work-a-day lower middle classes of society. That such children as these, after a few weeks' careful training at the hands of an accomplished musician and an intelligent stage manager, should perform so difficult a work as "The Pirates of Penzance" quite faultlessly, from a musical point of view—nay, more, should act as well as sing their parts with a spirit, humour, and discretion rarely displayed by their professional seniors—goes far to prove at least that what is conventionally called "a musical ear" is a British national characteristic. The story of their preparation for the stage is a very simple one, but can hardly fail to interest music-lovers. These little ones, their voices and capacity to sing in tune having been tested by Mr. Carte in person, were taken in hand by Messrs. Cellier and Barker some ten weeks before the date fixed for the reproduction of the "Pirates" with a juvenile cast. Their ages, I should mention, varied between ten and thirteen. With but few eliminations or fresh recruitments, the company of Mr. Carte's original choice, fifty-four in number, underwent daily rehearsal for a little over two months; and their relations with their instructors were so consistently the reverse of irksome to them that, during that interval of time, only one child (and that one, as I am given to understand, not a "singing-super," but a "principal") was constrained to shed tears by the difficulties of its task. The discipline to which the children were subjected, though strict, was never severe; unlike the adult supernumeraries in more than one popular London theatre, they were not sworn at, hustled about, or bespattered with epithetical mire, but were cheerily encouraged to do their best, and liberally praised when their endeavours proved successful. Under these genial influences and that of emulation, to which children of tender years are just as susceptible as those of larger growth, they attained the extraordinary degree of efficiency to which I have already alluded, and which may be most concisely described by the single word—perfection.

In Miss Elsie Joel, the small prima-donna of this admirable company, the Savoy management has discovered a pearl of great price. Gifted by nature with a powerful and flexible voice compassing two full octaves, this amazing child, at twelve years of age, is already a mistress of the art of vocalization. She executes elaborate *fioriture* with the ease and *désinvolture* of a Frezzolini; her *attaccamento* exhibits the reckless intrepidity that is alone inspired by inward certitude of infallibility; her tone-production would gladden the heart of Lamperti himself; and the truth of her intonation is absolutely flawless. She is, moreover, always within herself, obviously putting no strain upon her physical powers: a circumstance of happy augury, emboldening one to hope that she will not wear her lovely voice to shreds before it shall have attained its full development. If she do not, a bright and golden future awaits her upon the lyric stage, which has indeed seldom witnessed so brilliant a début as hers in the part of Mabel.

Harry Tebbutt, who impersonated Frederick, the pirate-apprentice, is scarcely a less remarkable vocalist than Elsie Joel. His, too, is one of those strangely sympathetic voices the mellow pathos of which makes every fibre of a musician's heart thrill with the exquisite pleasure that is so closely

akin to pain. I can recall few sensations of musical bliss so intense as that which I experienced whilst listening to the touching little duet, "Oh! leave me not to pine," sung by Frederick and Mabel in the second act of the "Pirates." Mine were not the only eyes by many filled with grateful tears as those tiny songsters delivered Sullivan's sweet strains with an innocent tenderness and pure tunefulness that I shall never hear excelled in this planet. The boy is a bright, intelligent actor, too, as well as a super-excellent singer, and a handsome lad to boot, well set up and graceful in his movements. He is "made up" to resemble a popular English light tenor, of whom he is a curiously exact reproduction, supposing the latter to be contemplated through a pair of reversed opera-glasses. His àplomb and self-possession on the stage, the fervour of his love-making, and the smartness with which he fires off all his "points," are simply astounding.

Of the brothers, Stephen and Charles Adeson, who sustained the extravagantly humorous parts of the Pirate King and the Police Sergeant, it may be said without fear of contradiction that they are born wags and predestined operatic comedians. "Caparisons are odorous," as everybody knows; were they otherwise, I should certainly indulge in them with relation to these excruciatingly funny boys and their adult predecessors, in their respective rôles. As it is, I will simply record the fact that I have never seen a *première* audience, necessarily composed to a considerable extent of persons somewhat *blasés* of dramatic and musical entertainments, so irresistibly and ungovernably moved to laughter as was the gathering of critics and "professionals" assembled to witness the dress rehearsal of the Miniature Pirates. Young Percy, too—a diminutive little chap, nearly a head shorter than either of the Adesons—fairly took the house by storm with a stiff, sententious, elderly-gentlemanly rendering of the "Modern Major-General," that was, to speak quite within bounds, a master-piece of comic acting. The clever imp sung his patter-song and spoke his words with a distinctness and weird gravity worthy of George Grossmith himself, and was as comfortably at home in all his "business" as the oldest actor on the British, or any other stage. A small girl, hight Georgie Esmond, displayed healthy dramatic instinct as the much-snubbed Ruth, and the parts of Edith, Kate, and Isabel Stanley, were most satisfactorily filled. As for the chorus singing, I lack words to express the delight it gave me. What beautiful fresh young voices! how perfectly they sang in tune! how clear and crisp the harmonies rang through the house when the dandified little pirates and dainty little maidens, all kneeling and gazing upwards with their large bright eyes, delivered Sullivan's impressive chorale, "Hail, Poetry," with inimitable purity and finish! I noticed around me some of the "hardest nails" in town quite unaffectedly staunching "the unfamiliar brine" at that moment; and one of the opera's joint authors—I leave those amongst my readers who know them both to divine which—was fairly overpowered by emotion. To my mind, the tears he shed were a supreme tribute of praise to the best performance, taking it all in all, I ever heard in or out of London.

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

## "MANON."

An Opera in Four Acts. Music by J. Massenet. Words by MM. H. Meilhac and Ph. Gille. First performed at the Opera Comique, Paris, January 17, 1884. First produced in England (English version by Joseph Bennett) at the Court Theatre, Liverpool, January 17, 1885.

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| Le Chevalier des Grieux ... ... ... | Mr. Barton M'Guckin. | De Bretigny ... ... | Mr. Hallan. |
| Le Comte des Grieux | Mr. W. H. Burgon. | Poussette ... ... ... | Miss Clara Perry. |
| Lescaut ... ... ... | Mr. Ludwig. | Javotte ... ... ... | Miss Bensburg. |
| Guillot Morfontaine ... | Mr. Maurice de Solla. | Rosette... ... ... ... | Miss Marian Burton. |
| | | Manon ... ... ... ... | Madame Marie Roze. |

Whatever may be the eventual fate of "Manon" in this country, there can be no doubt about the brilliancy and heartiness of its reception on the occasion of its first performance in our midst. Mr. Carl Rosa's handsome theatre was crowded in every part by an audience of a very representative character, including as it did the Earl and Countess of Sefton, the Mayor of Liverpool, and a number of musicians from all parts of England, in addition to a large body of playgoers who were evidently determined to judge the opera strictly on its merits. The result was a genuine triumph for all concerned. The curtain, raised once at the end of the first act, had to be raised no fewer than three times at the end both of the second and of the third acts, when Madame Roze and Mr. M'Guckin received a veritable ovation, Madame Roze being also the recipient of numerous bouquets. Mr. Rosa himself was called for at the end of the third act, and the curtain fell at the close on an unquestionable popular success. And these honours were thoroughly deserved. It was well, to begin with, that the enterprise and liberality of Mr. Rosa should be thus markedly rewarded. That gentleman does not allow the grass to grow under his feet. It was only the other day that he revived "Der Bettel Student," giving for the first time (in England) an adequate rendering of the opera. We now find him introducing "Manon" to an English audience just twelve months after its first performance in Paris. And we find him, too, producing the work in the most complete and most artistic manner. Everything, evidently, had been done which could tend to commend the opera to the English public. At the instance, I believe, of Madame Roze, the opera had been carefully revised and, to some extent, remodelled, a new aria being written specially for the prima donna, the finale being modified, and so on. Mr. Joseph Bennett had been secured as the adapter of the words, an exceptionally good cast had been provided, and, as regards scenery, costumes, and appointments, there had clearly been very lavish expenditure. Some of the scenery—notably that used in the first act (Courtyard of an Inn at Amiens), in the first scene of the third act (Cour de la Reine, Paris), and in the second scene of the fourth act (a lonely road to Havre)—was admirable; whilst the costumes, especially in the *fête* and gambling scenes, were rich and most tasteful. The performance, too, was well worthy of the applause accorded to it. Madame Roze, who on this occasion created, so far as England is concerned, the rôle originally played by Mdlle. Marie Heilbron, at once made her mark. There was no sign of immaturity in her impersonation. She was from the first the Manon drawn by the composer and the librettists. She had evidently found a rôle for which her personal attractions as well as

her vocal and histrionic gifts eminently adapt her. Manon must have beauty, to begin with; and the character is so thoroughly French that it is well it should be represented, as it is in this case, by a French artist. Indeed, the lady who has succeeded so admirably as Madame Roze has done in Carmen could not fail to succeed equally with Manon. Not that the two heroines are by any means identical in idiosyncrasy. Carmen is a purely sensual woman, for whom there is no law but her own caprice. Manon is possessed rather by the spirit of frivolity. She is, as she confesses, fond of pleasure. She loves Des Grieux; but she loves money, and jewels, and dress, and society, and, it would seem, wine, far better than her lover. For these she is willing to abandon him in favour of De Bretigny, and, when she returns to him, it is only to exhaust his patrimony, and to urge him to replace it at the gaming-table. She repents and dies pathetically at the end; but it cannot be said that she carries with her the sympathies of the audience, skilfully as Madame Roze contrives to hide or soften down the worst features of her character. If Manon charms at present, it is because Madame Roze looks, acts, and sings the part with so much power and *vraisemblance*. In person she realizes Manon to the life; she plays throughout with grace, finesse, and, when necessary, with force and pathos, and vocally the part is quite within her means. She sings the song specially composed for her with brilliancy and effect, and in the really powerful scene with Des Grieux, at the close of the third act, her vocalization and acting are alike full of *verve* and passion. Mr. M'Guckin, too, is unexceptionable as Des Grieux. Rarely has he acted or sung so well as he did on the first night of "Manon." He appeared to have entered thoroughly into the character, and surprised me by the vigour and intensity he displayed. In the great duet he ably seconded Madame Roze, and he gave the charming little air in the second act with much taste, skill, and purity of intonation. On the whole, I am disposed to say that Des Grieux will rank among the most successful efforts of this excellent tenor. Mr. Ludwig as Lescaut was vocally and histrionically without flaw, whilst Mr. Burgon and Mr. De Solla proved themselves quite equal to the parts assigned to them. On the other hand, Mr. Hallan did not appear to me an adequate De Bretigny. The small rôles undertaken by Mdlles. Perry, Bensburg, and Burton were of course well filled, whilst the chorus and the orchestra sang and played respectively as if they had been familiar with the music all their lives. The perfection of the representation was indeed remarkable, and it is difficult to imagine that, even in London, it will be surpassed in excellence. The opera itself may be described as composed on the Wagnerian principle, but not strictly in the Wagnerian manner. It is a musical drama rather than an opera of the old Italian type. The composer has not set himself to write a certain number of solos, duets, trios, and so on, which should stand out in distinctive prominence, but has endeavoured rather to supply a sort of musical picture of the story put before him by the librettists. It is a picture in which the vocalists may be said to represent the figures, whilst the orchestra supplies the background. And the drawing and colouring are alike the work of a master-hand. Massenet has thoroughly grasped the characters and incidents of the play, and

puts them all before us with remarkable vividness. Personally, I think it a pity that there should be any spoken dialogue, spoken though it be to orchestral accompaniment; but, that apart, the general effect of the music is very impressive. The vocal writing, though always characteristic of the individual and appropriate to the situation, is, also, always melodious, and the orchestration varies, skilfully and delightfully, with the variations of the incidents enacted and the emotions portrayed. There is a trace of *leit-motif* in the score, but it is not used obtrusively. M. Massenet's picture has been indeed very carefully "composed," and it is as admirable in parts as in the whole. The most popular features of the score, it may be added, are the aforesaid great duet, Manon's apostrophe to the "little table," the new song for Manon and the air for Des Grieux in the second act, and the trio sung by the three "actresses." But some of the choral and *ensemble* writing is very skilful and charming, and will make its way into the good graces of the public. The work of adaptation has been well done by Mr. Bennett. He has not in this instance many opportunities for showing his command of lyric measures, but his libretto has a distinctly poetic flavour, as well as much dramatic force. It is, as might be expected, considerably above the usual level of operatic "books." The story, as set forth in it, does not bear much resemblance to the Abbè Prévost's famous romance, nor is the narrative as consecutive and intelligible as might be desired; but for neither of these facts, in all probability, is Mr. Bennett responsible. The desire, no doubt, has been to make the "plot" of "Manon" as acceptable as possible to English audiences.

W. Davenport Adams.

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The winter musical season set in early in December, but, from a polyhymnian point of view, with something less than its wonted severity; but musicians of the concert-giving persuasion are bestirring themselves, and the last few weeks' record of chamber-music chronicles two or three "events" of no inconsiderable interest. For instance, Leonhard Bach, the Prussian Court pianist, whose fine playing was so striking a feature of many musical entertainments during the summer of 1884, recently performed a feat (to the best of my belief) without precedent in this country, and compared to which any one of the much overrated labours of Hercules was what is sometimes described in advertisements as "light and recreative employment." In a word, Herr Bach played three of Beethoven's five P.F. concertos, accompanied by a full orchestra under the direction of Signor Alberto Randegger, in succession. What is more, he gave an extremely meritorious, intelligent rendering of the master-works in question (op. 37, C minor, 73, E flat, and 15, C major), displaying no less vigour than delicacy of execution. It was really an extraordinary achievement. A man must have leonine muscles, as well as courage, to tackle three concertos, one after another, and get the better of them without exhibiting the least symptom of fatigue or exhaustion. To listen to such an encounter is in itself no slight enterprise. I remember some years ago, at Berlin, hearing Dr. von Buelow play five Beethoven sonatas from memory in the course of one evening, and being so utterly crushed in spirit

by that unparalleled infliction that I caught myself feebly wondering why the German laws, which are elephantine in their comprehensiveness (they recognize no fewer than seventeen valid grounds for divorce!) should have provided no punishment of abnormal severity for such incorrigible malefactors as my tormentor for the time being. In the case of Herr Bach, however, although the task he undertook was scarcely less formidable than that so wearisomely performed by Buelow on the occasion referred to, no one present could justly be offended, or even bored; for the "Chevalier" plays the piano like a sentient and sympathetic human being, not like an ingenious but inanimate machine. It is creditable to a favourite *alumnus* of the great Canon of Albano—to a fervent disciple of the "storm-and-strain" school of pianism—that he should have laboured so successfully to study the sublime works of the most classical of all composers for the clavichord, living or dead.

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Miscellaneous concerts are such depressing entertainments as a rule, that rare exceptions, like Signor Albanesi's *soirée musicale* given at Mr. Leyland's handsome house in Prince's Gate, deserve grateful acknowledgment at the hands of sincere music-lovers. The bénéficiare himself is a deft and dainty executant, as well as an agreeable composer of pianoforte music; his playing, moreover, is characterized by all that genial warmth and subtle *finesse* that distinguish the young Italian pianists of the present day from the more vigorous but more prosaic German soloists. Signor Albanesi performed a great many pieces by different composers and in various styles (including five of his own *morçeaux de salon*) at his concert, not only faultlessly, but charmingly. He was admirably supported by that inimitable drawing-room songstress, Alice Barbi, who, I rejoice to learn, has resolved to make London her home; by Miss Damian, whose fine voice and excellent delivery never fail to delight her hearers; by William Shakespeare, anent whose superb vocalization I exhausted my vocabulary of admiration and praise years ago; and by Signor Papini, whose merits as a violinist have hitherto, I think, scarcely obtained the full recognition they deserve, in this country at least. Such a *personnel* and such a programme as those of the Albanesi concert constituted a green refreshing oasis in the desert of mediocre musical entertainments through which the London public is doomed to wander wearily, year after year, from chill October to sultry July. A few days earlier in the past month it was my privilege to attend the first of Signora Raimo's winter afternoon receptions, at which, amongst many other interesting vocal and instrumental performances, Mademoiselle Delphine Le Brun's brilliant rendering of a manuscript cavatina by that clever conductor and genial composer, Alberto Raimo, was greeted with enthusiastic applause by a numerous and fashionable gathering of professional and amateur musicians. Isidore de Lara, whose health is completely re-established, also sang a somewhat elaborate song of the Niedermayer school with all his accustomed grace, tenderness, and exquisite finish; and I was very favourably impressed by the pretty voice, pure intonation, and sprightly manner of enunciating words and music alike of Miss Ullathorne, a young artist of unusual promise.

What must continental musicians, whose opera-houses are in full swing, not only in the capitals of great realms, but in an infinite number of provincial centres neither as large nor as populous as an average London parish, think of this huge metropolis and its four millions of inhabitants when they read in their newspapers—as I have read of late in the leading journals of Paris, Berlin, and Vienna—what is the actual condition of our three magnificent opera-houses, and what are our prospects for the coming four or five months, as far as performances of the lyric drama are concerned? It must appear little short of incredible to them that the British public, with all its pretensions to musicality, and with a reality of wealth at its disposal surpassing that of more than one entire European nation, should allow Her Majesty's to become an inferior musical promenade, Covent Garden to be metamorphosed into a circus, and Drury Lane to be monopolized by pantomime. The spectacle presented by these three great theatres at the present moment, associated as they are in the minds of foreigners as well as of Englishmen with the splendid traditions of an operatic past, is indeed a distressing and humiliating one. It is but poor consolation to the musical public that impresarii should shrug their shoulders and mutter, "Behold the inevitable result of the starring system, foretold by us years ago!" Why, then, did these gentlemen not only submit to the impositions of that system, but stimulate them to irrational extravagance by outbidding one another in order to secure the services of singers ever prone to overrate their own commercial value? Nothing is more true than that the outrageous salaries demanded nowadays by popular opera-singers have scotched, if not killed outright, operatic enterprise, by rendering it impossible that a manager should make any profit upon such an undertaking. But that such an absurd and iniquitous state of affairs should have come to pass is at least as much the managers' fault as that of the artists who have done their best to ruin impresa after impresa. Prime-donne, for instance, are notoriously selfish, grasping, and inconsiderate; but, from their point of view, they are justified in taking whatever they can get, whether or not the remuneration accorded to them be incompatible with anything like prolonged solvency on the part of their employers. The real cause of the calamities that befall these latter lies in their weakness in yielding to extortion, and short-sightedness in not foreseeing that nothing but bankruptcy can come of spending more money than they earn. Meanwhile, a few singers have been enriched; and the London public is deprived of one of its favourite recreations, because managers and executant artists have contrived between them, by a combination of folly and greed, to put it out of their own power to keep even one of our three noble opera-houses open for the performance of lyric drama. "'Tis true, 'tis pity; pity 'tis, 'tis true."

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Amongst the musical novelties that have recently come under my notice are a pleasing, simple setting, by Jessie Botterill, of Thomas Heywood's beautiful words, "Pack, clouds, away;" a somewhat elaborate musical treatment of some verses by Malcolm Salaman, called "Love's Legacy," from the inexhaustible pen of his father, that gifted and vivacious musical

veteran, Mr. Charles Salaman; and two pianoforte drawing-room pieces, of no remarkable significance, composed and dedicated to Madame Viard-Louis by Herr F. Lichtenstein. These three works are published by Messrs. Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co., of New Bond Street. I have received several other so-called "compositions," vocal and instrumental, from London publishing firms. Not being able to say anything pleasant about them, I will refrain from calling my readers' attention to any particular example of the abominations or feeblenesses with which they abound. How such rubbish obtains publication at all passes my comprehension.

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

# Our Play-Box.

## "LA PRINCESSE GEORGES."

A Drama, in Three Acts, by Alexandre Dumas, the younger. Produced at the Gymnase Theatre, Paris, on December 2, 1871. Acted in English at the Prince's Theatre, on Tuesday, January 20, 1885.

| | *Paris.* | *Prince's.* |
|---|---|---|
| Prince de Birac | MM. Pujol. | Mr. C. F. Coghlan. |
| Count de Terrémonde | Landrol. | Mr. C. W. Somerset. |
| Galanson | Françes. | Mr. F. Everill. |
| Cervières | | Mr. Dalzell. |
| The Baron | | Mr. H. Crisp. |
| De Fondette | Train. | Mr. J. Carne. |
| Victor | Raymond. | Mr. Smedley. |
| Séverine | Mmes. Desclee | Mrs. Langtry. |
| Sylvanie | Pierson. | Miss Amy Roselle. |
| Madame de Perigny | | Mrs. John Billington. |
| The Baroness | Massin. | Miss Helen Mathews. |
| Valentine de Bandrémont | Fromentin. | Miss Kate Pattison. |
| Berthe | Jeanne. | Miss Annie Rose. |
| Rosalie | Bedard. | Miss Rosina Filipi. |

WHY Mrs. Langtry should have elected to make her reappearance on the London stage in "La Princesse Georges" is, to me at least, an impenetrable mystery. The drama does not even possess the meanest requisites for representation on the English stage. Its mechanical construction is ludicrously weak, its motive is not quite apparent, and its characters, one and all, are worthy of reprobation instead of sympathy or interest. The play has neither beginning or end. At its conclusion affairs are in pretty much the same state as on the rising of the curtain on the first act, excepting that a poor youthful lover has been murdered in cold blood. The Prince may carry on his intrigues with his wife's friends interminably, for all we know to the contrary, he may continue to squander his wife's fortune on wine and women, and his wife may go on vowing vengeance and relenting and being the cause of innocent people being shot, for the next twenty years. M. Alexandre Dumas *fils* may be a great moralist, but in the present case I do not see the advantage of his morality. His characters are either hateful or contemptible. Could there be a meaner wretch than this Prince de Birac, who neglects his wife and gives his own attention and his wife's money to an adventuress? who lies to his wife, insults and deceives her? And his wife, the Princess George, who may be as pure as the angels, is hardly a character for the spectator to fall in love with. She sets a spy to watch the movements of her husband,

she finds that she is being deceived, causes the jealous husband of her own husband's mistress to set a death-trap for the Prince, at the last moment fails in her purpose, and one of her guests receives the bullet designed for her husband. The Princess is a loving woman, but she is weak and revengeful. Instead of doing her duty when she finds that she is dishonoured, she vacillates, makes plans only to break them, and finally remains in the same position as she was at first with her faithless husband in her arms. Then Sylvanie, the Princess's friend, is a most interesting and lovable person, truly. She is an adventuress who cares, principally, for gold; she obtains the love of her friend's husband, and is in other respects about as bad, worthless, and contemptible a character as could well be put upon the stage.

The other characters are on a level with these three. Even the very servants deceive their master and mistress in the most cold-blooded fashion. What people! Scarcely a good woman or an honourable man among them! What society, what manners, what life! But all M. Dumas' apparent disbelief in love and virtue, and faith and honour, might have been pardoned had he produced a sound theatric work, had he once moved the feelings of his audience in any way whatever. But his piece does not possess one possible motive for sympathy, or one single character deserving of the slightest commiseration. Its doctrine appears to be death for dishonour, but death is dealt out to the innocent, the guilty being left free to pursue their old paths of vice. The play has no action to speak of, the same dead-level of "words, words, words," being maintained throughout. The original contains more dialogue than the translation, but the English version, short as it is, is too long for the story, if such a phase of Parisian life as is here represented can be termed a story.

With a play so utterly unsuited to English tastes as "La Princesse Georges," a piece at once immoral and ineffective, the very finest acting would be required to force it into a success. At the Prince's Theatre, the drama, it must be boldly said, has not the advantage of adequate, much less of good, or perfect interpretation. Much has already been written by certain critics who describe at considerable length the beauty of Mrs. Langtry's dresses and the loveliness of her face and figure, very little being said about the lady's acting. Of course, if the public go to the theatre to admire Mrs. Langtry's person and her beautiful costumes they will be amply satisfied with the representative of the Princess George. I may be mistaken, but I think the public require something more than this. And I am willing to believe that Mrs. Langtry aspires to the rank of an actress, and not to be regarded as an elaborately dressed doll. Some few weeks ago I had the opportunity of seeing Mrs. Langtry, in the country, in "The Lady of Lyons." She then acted with ease, much power, and an admirable command of pathos. Her Pauline struck me as being by far the best of her performances and a marked improvement upon her acting in London. Yet on the first night of "Princess George" she seemed just as much a novice in her adopted profession as when she appeared as Rosalind at the Imperial Theatre in 1882. Her actions were just as constrained and awkward, and she seemed to have little idea beyond looking pretty. Power was entirely lacking, and she did not once strike a pathetic note.

But the genius of Aimée Desclée could not secure interest for the Princess George, and Mrs. Langtry cannot be altogether to blame for not succeeding where Desclée failed.

The support accorded to Mrs. Langtry was not at all good. Mr. Coghlan played with his accustomed ease as the Prince, but he did not exert himself greatly. Miss Amy Roselle acted with fine power in her one scene, Mrs. Billington was of good service as Madame de Perigny, the Princess's mother, and Mr. F. Everill was excellently made up as Galanson, the notary. But the best performances were those of two minor characters—Victor, the valet, played with admirable neatness by Mr. Smedley, and Rosalie, the Princess's maid, acted with intelligence and precision by a new comer, Miss Rosina Filipi. A. B.

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P.S.—The story of the various endings to "La Princesse Georges" by Alexandre Dumas—all of them, by the way, more or less unsatisfactory—may as well be correctly given. The play was, as it is well known, written in 1871, for the celebrated actress, Aimée Desclée. In the original manuscript, the author had arranged the catastrophe as follows:—The wife implores her husband to remain with her, as if he goes he is a dead man, the jealous Count de Terrémonde having sworn to shoot his wife's lover. Notwithstanding the entreaties of Séverine the Prince goes out. A pistol shot is heard. The mother of Séverine rushes in. "A shot was fired in the garden, what is the matter." "My husband," gasps Séverine, thinking he is dead. Enter de Terrémonde pistol in hand. "Murderer," shrieks Séverine. But to the surprise of everybody in walks the Prince unhurt.

"Who, then, is killed?" asks Séverine.

"De Fondette."

"Pauvre enfant, et sa mère," whimpers the old lady.

"And," answers de Terrémonde, "I will kill any one who comes between me and my wife."

Whereupon the sententious valet, Victor, makes a wry face.

"Why, he will be murdering half Paris! I must get him arrested."

And the curtain falls on this daring joke, not very complimentary to the honour of Madame de Terrémonde.

This is the ending printed in the published version of the dramatic works of Alexandre Dumas. But when the play was rehearsed at the Gymnase in 1871 there was a cry of horror when the Prince left the stage. It was considered inconceivable that he could leave his wife at such a juncture. So the ending was modified. The Prince never left the stage before the pistol shot was fired, and it was clumsily inferred that de Terrémonde had butchered his own wife in the garden. This modified ending is the one used at the Prince's Theatre, at the desire of the stage manager, Mr. Coghlan, with the exception of Victor's last line, which was cut out at the very last rehearsal.

It is, however, interesting to note that when the play was revived in Paris at the Vaudeville in 1881, the original ending of Dumas was resorted to, and was found to go very well indeed.

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"No, Hubert, no. While that man lives your home cannot be mine."

IN HIS POWER.

Ada Cavendish

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE," BY BARRAUD,

## "IN HIS POWER."

An Original Drama, in Three Acts, by Mark Quinton. First acted at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, on Saturday, September 20, 1884.
Produced, for the first time in London, at the Olympic Theatre, on Wednesday, January 21, 1885.

| | *Liverpool.* | *Olympic.* |
|---|---|---|
| Hubert Graham... ... ... ... | Mr. Mark Quinton. ... ... | Mr. Kyrle Bellew. |
| Dr. Cameron ... ... ... ... | Mr. C. Allerton. ... ... ... | Mr. J. G. Grahame. |
| Mr. Walker... ... ... ... ... | Mr. W. T. Elworthy. ... ... | Mr. W. T. Elworthy. |
| René ... ... ... ... ... ... | Mr. C. P. Forester. ... ... | Mr. Mark Quinton. |
| Eugène Scara ... ... ... ... | Mr. J. A. Rosier. ... ... ... | Mr. Charles Cartwright. |
| Johnson ... ... ... ... ... | Mr. Walker. ... ... ... ... | Mr. G. Hodson. |
| Mrs. Walker ... ... ... ... | Miss Gladys Homfrey. ... ... | Miss Lizzie Claremont. |
| Marie Graham ... ... ... ... | Miss Ada Cavendish. ... ... | Miss Ada Cavendish. |

"In His Power" is a strong, healthy drama, not too ambitious, interesting, sensational but probable, well put together and well acted, and therefore likely to suit the tastes of the old frequenters of the Olympic, and to please the younger generation of playgoers. It would be easy to point out the weak parts of the play, but it must be remembered that the drama is the first work of a young author, whose faults are merely those of inexperience, and will disappear in his future efforts. The most noticeable defect, and one that Mr. Mark Quinton should strive to overcome, is the weakness and prolixity of his dialogue. There is too much dialogue in the play, and what there is is not by any means as strong, terse, and to the purpose as it should be. Then, again, the last of the three acts contains much that is quite unnecessary. No one cares to hear a bad imitation of the yells and hooting of an infuriated mob, and a desperate but badly managed fight between the spy and his boyish dupe is not an interesting spectacle. It would be quite sufficient for the audience to know that the villain had met his just reward, and the sound of the distant shots of the soldiers would be far more effective than all the noise, and turmoil, and yells and execrations of the citizens. Mr. and Mrs. Walker, the comic characters, are quite unnecessary, and are merely introduced for the sake of gaining a laugh from some injudicious gallery spectator. They do not assist the play in the slightest degree, nor are they by any means original. For the rest of his work, Mr. Quinton is deserving of commendation. The action of the drama occurs during the Siege of Paris in 1871, and, although Mr. Quinton gives a somewhat rosy-coloured view of Parisian life during that eventful period, his drama is stirring enough for all that. His principal characters are picturesquely treated. The heroine, Marie Graham, has married without telling her husband that she had previously contracted a marriage with Eugène Scara, which turned out to be bigamous, Scara having a wife alive. She believes Scara to be dead, but he turns up as a spy in the employ of the Germans, forces the wife to aid him in copying an important despatch which had been entrusted to the keeping of her husband, and, on being discovered, Scara denounces Marie as his former mistress. This scene closes the second act, and is skilfully worked up. But the drama falls off thereafter, and the third and last act is not nearly so good as the others. It is almost needless to say that husband and wife are reconciled, and that the villain stands confessed, and meets a traitor's fate. The heroine is excellently portrayed by Miss Ada Cavendish, who acts

throughout with power and pathos. Mr. Kyrle Bellew is earnest and consequently more interesting than usual as the husband, and Mr. Charles Cartwright plays with force and effectiveness as Scara, though I would prefer to see a more subtle and incisive rendering of the character than he gives. Intending visitors to the Olympic may be advised to go in time to witness the performance of Mr. Fred. W. Broughton's pretty and well-written comedietta, "Ruth's Romance," in which a capital bit of comedy acting is given by clever Miss Tilbury. A. B.

# Our Omnibus-Box.

"LET sleeping dogs lie." It would have been well had Mrs. Kendal remembered this wholesome proverb before she ventured in a moment of feverish haste and unfortunate impulse to make her celebrated speech at Birmingham, and to follow it up with remarks at an interview that were almost as misleading as her original lecture. The sleeping dog was quietly asleep, and Mrs. Kendal pulled him by the tail. She goaded him, she pinched him, she irritated him to madness, and from that day to this there has been such a barking and growling heard as were never heard before in the history of the modern stage. Before Mrs. Kendal stepped forth into the arena to deliver herself of her undesirable platitudes, and to let off the steam of her righteous indignation, the stage question was fairly at rest. Prejudice was gradually disappearing. The church and the stage, like righteousness and peace, were kissing one another. Society consented to be smoothed down when the profession was mentioned. Old sores were being healed, stale contentions were at an end, charity and good faith reigned supreme. Unquestionably one of the wisest guides and counsellors in this matter of peace and toleration was Henry Irving. Quietly, seductively, undemonstratively the good seed was being sown at the Lyceum. Never since the days of Macready had been felt all round such a strong influence for good. Irving conquered by his strategy. He became, almost before he was aware of it, a leader of men. Youth elected him as their champion: women chose him as their friend: the dramatic profession voted for him as their chief: the public yielded to his power and wise administration. All that Irving and the stage wanted was support from influential members of the dramatic profession.

At this vital moment Mrs. Kendal stepped into the breach, and brandishing her shillelagh of indiscretion, she overturned the silent work of years. She managed to tread on every corn that could well be trodden on. She failed to convince the very society she intended to patronize. She selected Henry Irving and his work as a target for her acidulated sarcasm. She

saddened the discreet members of her own profession; she offended the critics of the press, men who have the stage as much at heart as Mrs. Kendal; men who have worked as hard, and harder, than she has ever done to uphold the dignity and honour of her profession. There was scarcely one error in judgment that partisan could make, which Mrs. Kendal did not succeed in accomplishing. And what is the result? Why Mr. Burnand's article in the *Fortnightly Review*, which however well intentioned, was neither politic nor discreet; Mr. John Hollingshead's airy and trenchant remarks on the morality of the Gaiety stage in the columns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and all the distasteful controversy about the stage and stage morals, which is simply disastrous in its effect. This is exactly what the Puritans wanted. They reeled before the shock of Henry Irving's calm consistency; they have rallied under Mrs. Kendal's ill-judged enthusiasm. This is exactly what they have long waited for. "The stage is not so pure after all," they say. "Doctors differ. Read Burnand, and he ought to know. Have you seen what Hollingshead says, with all his experience?" and so the evil work of depreciation prospers. Evil men, disappointed men, uncharitable women quickly join the ranks of the disputants, and incalculable harm is done. We do not attempt to dispute the conscientiousness of Mr. Burnand or of Mr. Hollingshead. They are as desirous of doing good in their way as Mr. Spurgeon, on the one hand, or Mr. Headlam on the other. We can respect the honesty of a Dissenter who thinks that the theatre is a pit of destruction, or of the High Church or Broad Church parson who considers that a path to heaven may be found through the divided ballet. But it is a pity these questions were ever raised at this moment, and that such a stronghold was given to the enemies of the stage to fulminate their uncompromising doctrines.

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The onus of the whole thing lies at the door of Mrs. Kendal. She has deliberately pulled the sleeping dog by the tail. If she would teach her brother and sister actors how to speak, walk, read, and understand; if she could inspire some of them with her own admirable sense of art and fitness; if she could induce them to believe that the world does not take them wholly at their own valuation; if she would persuade them that there is something nobler to be got out of stage work than riding horses in Rotten Row, or going out into society, she would undo some of the disastrous consequences of her ill-starred Birmingham oration, and her still more unfortunate interview. The actor's life and the actor's work, if properly understood, is a noble one. Great and pure lessons of health and morality are taught by artists on the stage—by artists, mind you, and not by charlatans. The public does not want to canvass the lives of any actor or actress, or to turn the theatre into a confessional. It hopes that actors and actresses will, like the rest of mankind, try to resist strong and alluring temptation, but its first desire is that one and all "should do their duty in that state of life" to which they have been called, to continue acting and to give up preaching. The union of church and stage is all very well; but we don't want to see the Bishop on the boards, or the clever actress in the pulpit.

An outcry has been made throughout the ranks of the dramatic profession at the want of charity displayed by Mr. Burnand in his famous article in the *Fortnightly Review;* but whatever individual opinion may be on that point, it was a leading actress and a popular actress who started the discussion, and who first threw down the gauntlet. It is quite clear that there is as much to be said on one side as on the other. The pity of it is that anything was said about it at all. No good can possibly come from such discussions, and it were more politic to leave such things unsaid. There is good as well as bad in this world; let us rather encourage what is pure than trumpet forth what is degrading and base. It may be true, though I can scarcely credit it, that Mrs. Kendal's experience of English journalists is what she herself declares it to be. It may be that she has found men who would sell their independence, their honesty, and their credit for a cup of coffee, a sight of Mrs. Kendal's boudoir, or for one of her husband's best cigars. She must feel these little hospitalities very acutely, or she would surely never dream of mentioning them. Unless she considered the tone of English journalism was despicable, she would never feel called upon to circulate stories which can have no object but derision, aimed at a set of men who have a very delicate task to do, and endeavour to perform it with credit to themselves and their employers. Possibly some of these same misguided journalists might have stories to tell also that would not wholly redound to the credit of the profession, immaculate as it is. But this I do know, that Mrs. Kendal, in the course of her long and honourable career, must have met with hundreds of journalists incapable of these petty and miserable meannesses; men, who, to the best of their ability, have helped her on her course of public usefulness; men who have striven, as she has striven, to enforce the value of what is true and beautiful in art, and have worked long and honourably in the face of severe opposition in the service of the stage. A word from Mrs. Kendal in recognition of such service, a word from one in her position to aid the exaltation of the drama into its rank amongst the fine arts, would not only have been more charitable, but more worthy of one who is held in such high esteem.

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Miss Jessie Bond, whose photograph in character, from "The Sorcerer," appears in this number, was born in London. She made her first public appearance, when only eight years of age, as a pianist, at Liverpool. She repeatedly performed in public until she was twelve years old. Her début as a vocalist was made, before she was seventeen years of age, at St. George's Hall, Liverpool. Subsequently, Miss Bond became the leading contralto singer at St. Peter's Catholic church in the same city. She then entered as a student at the Academy of Music, under Emanuel Garcia, and afterwards was a pupil of Mr. J. B. Welch. She made her first appearance on the dramatic stage on May 25, 1878, at the Opéra Comique, as Hebe, in the first performance of "H.M.S. Pinafore." She then went to America, where she appeared as Hebe, and, on the production of the "Pirates of Penzance," in New York, "created" the rôle of Edith. After an absence of eight months, she returned to the Opéra Comique, where also she acted Edith; and, on December 16, 1879, the part of Maria in "After

"But if the truth must be confessed,
I own I love him dearly."

THE SORCERER.

Jessie Bond

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE," BY BARRAUD,

"Don't do that."
THE PRIVATE SECRETARY.

W. J. Hill

Wm Penley

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE," BY BARRAUD,
263 OXFORD STREET, W.

All," a one-act vaudeville, written by Frank Desprez, composed by Alfred Cellier, and then first acted. Miss Bond has since played the following important original parts in Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's operas: Lady Angela, in "Patience;" Iolanthe, in the opera of that name; and Melissa, in "Princess Ida." She is at present appearing as Constance, in the successful revival of "The Sorcerer," at the Savoy Theatre. It is a fact worthy of note that Miss Bond has been under the management of Mr. R. d'Oyly Carte during the entire period of her connection with the stage, a period close upon seven years.

In her special "line"—that is to say, as what is professionally called a "singing soubrette"—Miss Bond deservedly occupies a leading position on the stage devoted to comic opera and operetta. Her voice is a pretty one, and she produces it very agreeably. Nature has been kind to her in the matter of "externals;" she is gifted with a bright intelligence, and a lively sense of humour, which, however, never tempts her to commit any of the vulgar extravagances which the public of to-day is too apt to tolerate, nay, to encourage, in its favourites. Having entered her profession at the bottom of the ladder, she has worked her way upwards, rung by rung, with a steadiness of purpose and manifest resolve to win laurels by legitimate labour that do her infinite credit. It is something for so young an artist to have attained the status achieved by Miss Bond in the Savoy company, of which she is one of the most highly valued members, having proved a distinct attraction to the public in every Sullivanesque-Gilbertian work produced at that theatre. Miss Bond has every reason to be satisfied with her career up to the present time; and we entertain no manner of doubt that its future will brilliantly fulfil the promise of its past.

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Mr. W. S. Penley commenced his theatrical career in the burlesque of "Zampa" at the Court Theatre, under Miss Litton's management; but the first part with which his name became identified was that of the Foreman in "Trial by Jury," at the Royalty Theatre. After various tours, he was engaged for the Strand Theatre, where he appeared as Zapeter in "Princess Toto," in October, 1876. He remained here for two years, playing various parts, notably Alexander Pumbleton in "Family Ties," Baron Stein in "Diplunacy," and the Hon. Richard Frobisher in "Our Club." In 1879, he went to the Royalty, where he acted Jellicoe in "Crutch and Toothpick," afterwards fulfilling an engagement in the provinces as Sir Joseph Porter in "H.M.S Pinafore." In May, 1880, Mr. Penley appeared as Popperton in "Le Voyage en Suisse" at the Gaiety. He went to America in September, 1881, with the Hanlon-Lees, playing in all the principal cities with great success. Returning to London in August, 1882, he was engaged for the reopening of the Globe, where he appeared as Mr. Bedford Rowe in "The Vicar of Bray." He joined the Comedy Theatre in October, 1882, to play the part of Derrick in "Rip Van Winkle." He subsequently acted the part of Lay Brother Pelican, at the same house, in the first performance of "Falka." When the "Private Secretary" was transferred from the Prince's Theatre to the Globe, he replaced Mr. Beerbohm Tree as the Rev. Robert Spalding, a character which he is

still acting with complete success, and in which he has been photographed, together with Mr. W. J. Hill, for this magazine.

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A study of womanhood, worthy our attentive and earnest consideration, has within the last few days been presented us by an artist endowed with somewhat more than ordinary gifts of mental and physical attraction. Needless to say that we allude to the anxiously looked-for appearance at the Royalty Theatre of Jane Hading, an actress whose rare personality possesses the power of drawing the minds of her audience into close and intimate relationship with the thoughts and feelings simultaneously affecting herself. As "Claire de Beaulieu" Jane Hading admirably succeeds in doing this, whilst depicting with no small variety and skill the ever-changing impulses and reflections alternately swaying the proud though essentially loveable nature of Georges Ohnet's heroine. Standing in thought apart, yet allowing neither sign of listlessness or inattention to mar the business of those surrounding her, this artist realistically portrays the whirlwind of sorrow which suddenly breaks over the life of the high-spirited, impulsive Claire, forcing her to accept, in an agony of wounded pride, the adoration of a love utterly and wholly distasteful to her every personal feeling and inclination. Never out of the picture for a single instant, Jane Hading proves as interesting a study, to our minds when dreamily listening to the conversation of her mother's friends and companions, as when employed in giving utterance to thoughts whose meaning is half if not wholly expressed by the sudden changes which flit across a face, singularly attractive from its combination of womanly grace and determination of purpose. Glancing for a moment at the memorable scene between husband and wife in act ii., we can conceive nothing finer or more realistic in power than the dogged obstinacy and indifference with which Claire confronts the tempest-tossed passion of the man to whom she has but recently sworn an oath of love and fidelity entirely at variance with her natural impulses and sentiments. The woman's face seems momentarily to change and alter under the fierce anger of her husband's sorrowing reproaches, otherwise their effect upon her is as nothing, provided she may be absolved from the responsibility she has so rashly and foolishly incurred; agonized tears on the part of her companion cannot avail in tearing from her heart, even for a moment's space, the remembrance of one recently all in all to her. And so, with unbending and merciless resolve of purpose, Claire turns towards the door of her apartment, but ere she gains its portals, words of pitiless meaning and unforgiveness are poured into her ear; the love now rejected will, she is told, in like manner be henceforth rejected to *her*. The affection she now tramples upon will as assuredly rise against her in the after days, robbing her heart of the comfort and peace she then will barter her life and existence to obtain. The woman's steps at this moment seem to falter—in the half closed eyes we perceive a gleam of awakened interest for the man who has so unexpectedly turned her unpremeditated but no less heartless cruelty in condemnation against herself. Already the pangs of conscience are beginning to assail her. One word of tenderness from her husband's lips would in all probability change at this instant the future destiny of their several lives;

but not a movement, not a syllable comes to aid Claire in this terrible and long-to-be-remembered hour. Abandoned and left alone to her own devices, the dominant feelings of pride and self-will gain once more the mastery over her, and so, blinded by wilful resolve and passion, the trembling woman rushes to the door, which in another second completely hides her from our view. But whatever her present course of action, we are plainly permitted to see how admiration of her husband's firmness has struck the first key-note of passion in Claire's heart, the existence of which reaches its climax of inspiration in Jane Hading's impersonation, when awaiting the touch of his hand to clasp the necklace round her throat, hungering for the kiss, which, after all, is but mechanically imprinted on her brow. Anything more subtle or delicate in execution than the unspeakable look of happiness and consequent despair overshadowing this artist's face at the close of the above mentioned scene it would be difficult indeed to conceive. Talent of no ordinary kind has gifted Jane Hading with power of silently depicting the varied joys and sorrows animating the human heart. By a single glance or look she conveys to us the meaning of countless words. Always acting, never allowing her mind to wander from the interests and business of those surrounding her, art is nevertheless, in her hands, a thing so much in unison and harmony with the laws of Nature, that it would be somewhat difficult to distinguish the line separating the one from the other. Is it any marvel, then, that we await this lady's appearance in other parts with no small degree of impatience and pleasurable curiosity? H.

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It would be somewhat difficult to find a collection of art more representative in character, and better chosen as regards variety of style and subject, than that constituting the present Winter Exhibition at Burlington House, a fact doubly recognizable to the mind of even the most casual observer when noting the judicious and well-arranged assortment of the varied gems inviting attention on whichever side he chances to turn. Here, for example, is displayed in vivid contrast to the voluptuous forms of Rubens' beauties, the sylph-like grace and delicacy encircling those of Romney's heroines, their attractions being equally shared, if not eclipsed, by the exquisite glow and depth of colour surrounding the immortal creations of Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose genius is to us as startling a reality when depicting the joys and sorrows of childhood as when it invests with light of heaven-born inspiration the face of a woman in supplicating prayer. Wholly impossible as would be the task of individually describing the several works of the aforenamed masters, coupled with those of Thomas Gainsborough, William Hogarth, George Morland, and many others, we would yet impose upon our readers' patience in asking them to linger with us for awhile over some few studies deserving special commendation and attention. Amongst innumerable depictions of the Blessed Virgin and Child, the remembrance of those by Murillo and Fra Bartolomeo will probably exist in our memories long after the recollection of others have passed away. Exquisitely soft in tone and colouring, there remains but one fault to be found with the figures of Fra Bartolomeo—that of over-materialism—a failing which, existent to a lesser degree in the masterpiece of Murillo's,

may here be readily forgiven when taking into consideration the marvellous repose of thought and posture pervading the entire study. A smaller representation of the same subject by Titian is alike worthy our praise and careful consideration.

Turning towards the portraits of bygone beauties and celebrities, we would single out for especial notice those of "Lady Brooke," by Romney; "Squire Hailiard and his Wife," by Gainsborough; and lastly, though certainly not least, the striking likenesses of the Duchess of Ancaster, and Mrs. Musters, both by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The figure of Lady Brooke, very beautiful in its soft delicacy of outline, is equalled, though scarcely surpassed, by that of Mrs. Musters as "Hebe." Anything more graceful than the drapery encircling these respective figures it would be difficult indeed to imagine, each fold seeming to reflect if possible the attitude affected by the wearer, notably in that of Lady Brooke, where the position of crossed feet is principally expressed by the soft undulations of the clinging gown, encircled at the waist by scarf of palest green, forming a truly delightful contrast to the reddish brown background. The peculiarly rich tone of the faded velvet worn by "Mary, Countess of Rothes" is likewise a remarkable instance of colouring by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Rather, however, would we linger over this artist's portrait of Mrs. Quarrington as "St. Agnes," a study full of poetic thought and sentiment. The rich auburn hair encircling this woman's upraised face seems as though enshrined in a framework of darkest brown, which throws into charming contrast the reddish hue of her loosely-cut robe, somewhat hidden beneath an olive green scarf thrown across the right shoulder. A small lamb of pure white nestles against the palm-branch she holds in her hand. The pale face, full of unspoken thought, yields to our minds a sense of satisfaction easier felt than described, and it is only with still wider appreciation for the great master's genius, that we turn towards an admirable likeness of the actor and dramatic writer, Samuel Foote, whose name is handed down to posterity not only as author of many plays, but as the fortunate possessor of wit, considered by his contemporaries to be unrivalled, Equally delightful are the numerous illustrations of child life, by Sir Joshua, existent in the present exhibition, amongst whom we would mention those of "John Fane—Lord Burghersh," and "Miss Penelope Boothby," the former a striking portrait of a merry golden-haired boy, the latter an example of quaint demureness, charmingly irresistible, when depicted in the person of this little maiden, clad in white frock and mob cap, relieved here and there by black ribbons. The picture entitled "The Dead Bird" constitutes as beautiful a portrayal of childish sorrow as does the "Miss Martindale," by Romney, of innocent contentment, mingled with an inimitable look of mischief, which not even the drooping lids of the dark brown eyes can wholly screen from observation. Space of time alone prevents our dwelling upon Gainsborough's exquisite study of "The Beggar Boys," a work replete with no ordinary strength of thought and imagination. Turning towards the scenes of rural life, we seem most forcibly to comprehend its delights and simple pleasures in the admirable study by George Morland, entitled "Dancing Dogs." Wonderfully amusing are the varied attitudes affected by the four-footed companions appertaining to this

itinerant showman, whilst minuteness of style is specially commendable in the companion pictures by the same artist, severally entitled "Idleness" and "Diligence." Equally meritorious is the study by S. Koning, of "A Merchant." Anything more lifelike than the sombre clad figure of this grey-bearded man, poring over time-worn papers and documents, it would be difficult to conceive. Neither, as instances of character sketches, totally opposed in their respective lives and positions, must we omit to mention the admirable portraits of "A Rabbi," and "A Hermit." The former, of portly mien and gracious bearing, as befits those enjoying the good things of this world; the latter, gaunt and weird in aspect, with eyes cast upon the rosary twined round his hands, seems to mingle in the shadows of a background composed of darkest hues. A greater contrast could scarcely be imagined than that presented by the afore-mentioned sketches. The artists' names are in both instances unknown.

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Among the various exhibitions open to the Art-loving public during the present season of the year, that under the supervision of Sir Coutts Lindsay at the Grosvenor Gallery, possesses a more than ordinary claim upon the attention of those wishing to familiarize themselves with the innumerable beauties of style and execution existent in the memorialized works of Thomas Gainsborough.

The collection in question, though one of general rather than individual merit, may yet be divided into certain sections, whereby we can more easily appreciate the wondrous skill and dexterity of the great Master hand, which could equally imprint on country scenes as on children's faces that true fidelity and realism of Nature whose influence must ever be for good upon the hearts both of present and future generations. This being more especially the case as regards the subjects connected with pastoral and idyllic life we would fain recall a few such instances to our reader's minds if only through the feeble mediums of pen and ink.

Foremost then amongst these charming representations of leafy lanes and wooded glens let us place that of the "Harvest Waggon," a remarkable production of varied depths and gradations of colour, whose apparent sombreness of tone seems almost beneath one's gaze to diminish and lighten in intensity as if under the influence of some magic power or invisible hand. The longer we allow our eyes to dwell upon this picturesque-looking wain o'ershadowed by dropping foliage which darkens yet more the light of departing day, the better can we understand the sentiment of Gainsborough's assertion "that the painting proved more pleasing to him than any he had ever executed." Fortunately for us, however, it is not alone at fall of day that we are permitted to contemplate and enjoy the great Master's genius. In the fresh beauty of early morning, when the pale yellow sky remains as yet untouched by the fierce rays of the summer's sun, let us linger for a space over this simply attired group of men and women, whose evident intention of "going to market" has been elected as title for the picture. The delicate green of the rustling trees reared against the softer lines of the firmament, endows the entire scene with a sense of living animation, such as one seldom experiences, save in the days of early spring-

tide, when the starry primrose emerges from its sheltering bed, hidden away in some sequestered nook or leaf-bestrewn lane. Space and time prevent us pausing over No. 54, a landscape with figures and cattle, as also upon the simple drama of home life, entitled "The Cottage Door," probably one of the most admired and well-known works of Gainsborough's. Leaving these to our reader's separate and individual attention we turn towards the portraits, many in number, and wondrous in diversity of style and execution. Two sketches, one, the celebrated "Duchess of Devonshire," the other, "Miss Linley, afterwards Mrs. Sheridan," may be regarded as perfect gems in their combined delicacy of touch and minuteness of detail. The exquisite grace and flow of the drapery encircling the figure of Mrs. Sheridan can be easier acknowledged than described, every hue being in perfect harmony and keeping with its surroundings, which are shadowed in a soft neutral tint, somewhat resembling that of sepia. The same tone existing likewise in the portrait of the "Duchess of Devonshire" inclines us to look upon these masterpieces of form and outline as pendants one to the other. The likeness of "John, Second Viscount Bateman," is a most interesting study of a charmingly youthful face, and the same may be said as regards those of "Edward R. Gardiner" and "Mr. Gainsborough Dupont," the latter being both nephew and pupil of his illustrious delineator.

Amongst so many claimants to equal praise and distinction we can do little more than mention, as worthy of especial notice, the portraits of "John, First Earl Spencer," a remarkably pleasing likeness, those of "Lady De Dunstanville" and "Mrs. Hingeston," the latter, a striking example of quaint originality, and lastly, though surely not least, the three-quarter length of "Anne, Duchess of Cumberland," a study so rich in colouring and dignified in repose of form and expression, that we are inclined to accord it a resemblance to the "Mrs. Siddons" of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Unlike the last-named master, there exists in the present exhibition but few works of Gainsborough's connected with the homely joys and unassuming ways of childhood; nevertheless, before drawing this criticism to an end, we would mention one out of three instances which will undoubtedly be proclaimed by many as the gem of the entire collection. We speak of "The Cottage Girl," a study of child-life that cannot fail to arouse our sympathies by its unaffected pathos and simple truth. Who, after once seeing, can forget this little dark-eyed girl, as, clad in a green-coloured dress of many holes and patches, over which is pulled a pinafore of greyish hue, she stands before us; one hand occupied by an earthenware pitcher, the other encircling a curly black and-white dog, whose spirits appear to be somewhat depressed by the sadness existent in his young mistress's demeanour. Assuredly this little maid of pensive mood is an exquisite study of child-thought, as she pauses for awhile in a present which pays as little heed to a swiftly-approaching future as it remembers the fleeting joys and sorrows of the past! Quaint and demure of aspect is "The Milk Maid," but nevertheless charmingly irresistible in her assumed air of dignified importance; whilst the group of three children, entitled "The

Wood Gatherers," is noticeable rather as a study of differing types of beauty than for any individual grace of feature or bearing.

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Coupled with the above-mentioned exhibition is a collection of drawings, by the late Richard Doyle, which demands somewhat more than a cursory inspection if we would appreciate the marvellous subtlety of fun and humour with which they are generally replete. "Under the Dock Leaves" is a gracefully-sketched group of winsome fairies, whose sylph-like forms find a secure resting-place under many a broad and sheltering leaf of myrtle green; whilst "The Haunted Park," in which two children are supposed to see the ghosts of former inhabitants enjoying themselves faun fashion in the woods, is no less admirable as regards fanciful execution than it is original in idea. "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" is another subject ably suited to the dexterous fingers of this clever artist; though for ourselves we would rather linger over "Ariel"—a most delicate illustration of a sprite sitting upon the film-like wings of a bat, which stretches itself like an evil shadow across the grey dusky hues of approaching night. Charmingly poetical in thought and execution, the foregoing sketch is well worthy our praise and consideration.

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Strangely diverse in subject and composition are the songs recently published by Messrs. Stanley, Lucas and Co., a fact which for many reasons may be warmly commended, when taking into consideration the variably opposed tastes and sentiments of the music-loving public to whom they appeal. First on the list is a production by Kate Ralph, entitled "Arise, Beloved," a melody of which the treatment reveals no small amount of promise as regards future success, whilst it may be confidently recommended to those possessing executive and vocal powers of greater scope than are generally to be encountered in the approved ballad of modern date. "At the feet of my love," by the same composer, is likewise a graceful albeit somewhat ordinary setting to words by Hamilton Aïdé. The poetic lines of C. Rossetti, commencing "Somewhere or other," find a most sympathetic exponent in the music supplied by A. Millais. Such melodious strains will assuredly gain the favour of many a home circle. Totally divergent are the tastes appealed to by C. V. Stanford, in his musical setting of the weird and tumultuous poem by Robert Browning, entitled "Prospice." Admirably, however, as this well-known composer has depicted in song the varied emotions conveyed in the aforesaid words, we cannot but regret such artistic work having been expended on a subject revealing to no marked extent those poetic beauties of thought and sentiment which must ever arouse the noblest, and therefore highest, aspirations to which the musician's pen can give voice.

With feelings of no little pleasure do we turn towards the latest production of that clever artist and musician Ciro Pinsuti, entitled "Three Wishes," published by the well-known firm of Messrs. Enoch and Sons. The words, by Clement Scott, appeared in The Theatre some few months ago under the title of "Three Prayers." So melodious are the strains to which they have at length been coupled, whilst as regards com-

pass and execution the song in question may be deemed within the powers of the most ordinary executant. Under such favourable auspices there can be small doubt of "Three Wishes" gaining the popularity it so well deserves.

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The choice of a "costume" piece is always a dangerous one for amateurs, because, although the fact has perhaps never been properly dwelt upon, there is something peculiar about the average amateur leg, especially in tights, or in knee breeches and silk stockings. An amateur may have brains—that is, his head may be all right; he may even have learned to use his hands with some resemblance to the ordinary gestures of a human being, but it is a thousand chances to one that his legs are unruly members, as well as unshapely. It may have been that the Insurance Amateurs, who played "Plot and Passion" at St. George's Hall on the 18th of December, were members of the Athletic Club, for whose benefit they appeared; but the fact is undoubted that they made a good appearance as regards that feature to which allusion has been made. Most of them bore themselves well in their costumes, and even looked as if to the manner born. "Plot and Passion" was well played throughout, the setting was fairly good, and the stage management excellent. The amateurs were fortunate in having the assistance of Miss Maud Williamson, who played Marie, or, as every gentleman who had to mention the name pronounced it, "Mărry." She looked the part well, and acted with great fervour, giving an extremely interesting and powerful rendering of the character. Fouché was played by Mr. Morrison with care and effect. His voice was good, his enunciation clear; he was well made up, and played picturesquely. As Desmarets, Mr. Rush was disappointing, at times playing very well, and at other times stagily and ineffectively. In moments of passion he assumed a posture more suggestive of "giving a back" at leap-frog, than of expressing emotion, and, in common with some other members of the cast, he generally indicated the pit of his stomach as the seat of his affections. Mr. J. C. Carstairs, as De Cevennes, looked handsome, wore his splendid dresses in gallant style, and played with quiet humour and good discretion. Mr. Moncrieff, as De Neuville, acted the lover with a fire and passion rare in an amateur, though the third act was rather beyond his power. Berthier's few lines were excellently spoken by Mr. Gore, whose costume and bearing were admirable. "Plot and Passion" was followed by a piece of inanity entitled "A Race for a Dinner," which speedily induced a race for the door. The actors were colourless in the extreme, except as regarded their costumes, which were of no age or country yet discovered, and were of all the hues of the rainbow, one unfortunate even rejoicing in a pair of bright blue trousers. It proved a capital piece for literally "playing the people out."

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Mr. John L. Child began his annual series of four recitals on January 8. St. George's Hall was well filled by an appreciative audience. A treat awaited them. Mr. Child had appropriately chosen, at this season, to give Charles Dickens's "Christmas Carol." The four chapters of this

charming story were recited by Mr. Child in admirable fashion. Letter perfect, with a remarkable ease of manner and gesture, his delivery has the great quality of simplicity and earnestness. The pathetic and comic passes are equally well rendered by him, and never over-done. What Mr. Child achieved last year was good, but this is far better. I sincerely believe that "A Christmas Carol" could not have been better interpreted, and I have heard Dickens read his own works. Between the parts Miss Annie Albu sang "Il Bacio" and "Angels ever bright and fair," and, being encored, "Coming through the Rye." The happy possessor of a charming voice and a no less charming presence, this young lady delighted every one.

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In the Town Hall, at Newbury, on Thursday and Friday, January 8 and 9, very successful amateur performances were held, under the management of the talented and rising amateur, Mr. Arthur Bourchier. The pieces selected were "Senior Wranglers," "The Ladies' Battle," and "Little Toddlekins." Mr. Whitmore's new duologue went extremely well in the hands of Mr. Bourchier and the Hon. G. Adderley; but the piece is a mere *lever de rideau*, and gave neither of the actors many opportunities. The *piece de résistance* was the "Ladies' Battle."

A large and enthusiastic audience on each of the nights expressed loud approbation of the comedy, which was interpreted in a manner which did much credit to the stage manager and to the amateurs. The Countess D'Autreval of Mrs. Courtney was a most careful and artistic performance, rich in natural pathos, and full of touches of true dramatic instinct; and the De Grignon of Mr. Bourchier was an equally excellent companion picture of real comic genius. Neither the Portia nor the Shylock of the Philothespian performance in Oxford a year ago found unworthy material for their histrionic skill. Mr. Courtney made the most of the Baron de Montrichard in the second act. Mr. Mackinnon as De Flavigneul was a duly sentimental and graceful lover, and Miss Bicknell in the part of the *ingénue*, Leonie de Villegontier, secured the sympathy and interest of the audience. The farce of "Little Toddlekins" proved as amusing as ever, Mr. Adderley giving a capital version of the "eighty-ton" Amanthis, and Mr. Bourchier as Babbicombe, and Mr. Mackinnon as Brownsmith, keeping the fun rolling with much spirit. All the performers were called before the curtain at the end of each play, and the funds of the Newbury National Schools, for whose benefit the performance took place, were materially assisted by the efforts of the Oxonians.

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Probably in no town of its size in the kingdom are amateur theatricals in greater vogue than in Torquay. Not long ago such a representation of "Pygmalion and Galatea"—especially of the animated statue—was given there as is seldom seen out of London. Still more recently, Mr. Herman Merivale's poetical play, "The White Pilgrim," was effectively played by a company mainly of amateurs, got together for its performance by Mr. J. N. Gould. And on Tuesday, December 23, a representation of Robertson's "School," on behalf of the funds of some local charities, took place at the Bath Saloon, in presence of one of those large and distinguished audiences

which fashionable Torquay can always furnish when the claims of benevolence are supplemented by the attraction of a performance in which those in front of the curtain are socially *en rapport* with those behind it. In "School," Mrs. Samuelson, a very piquant comédienne, was archly amusing as Naomi Tighe, and Miss Isabel Merritt, as down-trodden but, in the end, triumphant Bella, showed just appreciation of her part. The Hon. Slingsby Bethell's Dr. Sutcliffe was clerical, scholastic, genial, and Miss Hawkes, as the severely proper wife of his bosom, and controller of his household, were both excellent. The Lord Beaufoy of Mr. E. C. Gibson; Mr. M. Bevan's Jack Poyntz; the mean and malicious Krux of Mr. J. R. P. Goodden, a clever embodiment; and the old dandy, Farintosh, played by an hon. legislator, who figured in the programme as Mr. "Chelston Cross," each came in for a meed of honour at the hands of an amused audience. The *mise-en-scène* was especially good, and the orchestra and other adjuncts of the entertainment were all satisfactory. As the large hall was completely filled, the treasurer of the charities beneficially interested in the result, must be going on his way rejoicing.

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Miss M. Leigh-Noel, encouraged by the success deservedly attained by her clever and interesting study of the character of Lady Macbeth, has been induced to prepare for publication a series of papers on Shakspeare's girl heroines. The volume, under the title of "Shakspeare's Garden of Girls," will be issued early this year by Messrs. Remington and Co., Henrietta Street, Covent Garden. The price to subscribers will be half-a-guinea. Some of the papers have been read by the authoress, by special request, before the New Shakspeare Society, and have excited the greatest interest and discussion. In a vote of thanks accorded to Miss Leigh-Noel, Mr. F. J. Furnivall, the director of the society, said that "many side-lights on Shakspeare's women" had been shown by the papers.

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Those who do not write plainly, and who are in the habit of sending lengthy articles to printers, I would advise to place their MSS. in the hands of the Ladies' Type-Writing Association, Lonsdale Chambers, 27, Chancery Lane, an invaluable institution for rendering, quickly and cheaply, illegible manuscript into the clearest of print, thus providing "copy" from which it is impossible for compositors to misprint. By means of this institution young ladies are honourably employed, and their natural quickness is brought into play. Miss Ethel Garrett, the Secretary, deserves to succeed in her enterprize.

# THE THEATRE.

## "Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre."

By William Archer.

WHEN, in September last, the Paris theatrical season re-opened, I looked with interest for the first of the "Soirées Théâtrales," the anecdotic and satiric commentary upon things theatrical with which Arnold Mortier was wont to enrich the columns of the *Figaro*. I had not half finished the first article when I missed his easy yet incisive touch, and, glancing at the signature, found that it was not "Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre," but "Un Fauteuil de Balcon." "Mortier has not yet returned from his holiday," I thought; but week after week passed and still his lieutenant remained in command of his column. At last, on the 3rd of January, a black-edged article, signed by the editor of the *Figaro*, explained his absence from his post. His long vacation had commenced; he had passed once for all behind the curtain.

Arnold Mortier (his real name was Mortje) was born in Amsterdam in 1843, and was of Jewish descent. How he gained his mastery of the French language and the Parisian style, I cannot tell, but we find him arriving in Paris in 1865, determined to push his fortune in journalism. After a hard apprenticeship begun on the staff of a satiric paper, *Le Nain Jaune*, and continued in connection with several other more or less obscure and ephemeral journals, he at last found his true vocation in contributing to the columns of the *Gaulois* a series of those gossiping chronicles which afterwards made him famous. The first article (written in collaboration with M. Armand Gouzien) dealt with the production of "Frou-frou," by MM. Meilhac and Halévy (1869), and the writers adopted as their signature the title of this play. It was a much more apt and suggestive pseudonym than that of

"Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre," which Mortier assumed on joining the staff of the *Figaro* in 1873. His task was to reproduce the "frou-frou" of a Parisian first-night; to relate the genesis and history of the play, and give anecdotes of the rehearsals; to enumerate the notabilities among the audience, and describe the toilettes in the boxes and on the stage; to recount, or at need to invent, the *mots* of the green-room and of the corridors; in short, to act as a sort of accumulator for all the humours and rumours before and behind the curtain, and convey them in a spiritualized form to the outside public. A serious critic, Auguste Vitu, discussed the play as literature, the acting as art: Mortier in his parallel column, noted the social, the personal, the humorous aspects of the event. The term he applied to himself was "chroniqueur frivole."

Not an exalted calling this, and even, in any but the most skilful hands, a dangerous and objectionable one. Mortier's, fortunately, was the most skilful and delicate touch conceivable. He was never ill-natured, never scandalous, never (according to a French standard) vulgar. Though a foreigner by birth, he was more Parisian than the Parisians, and could be witty without malice, familiar without impertinence. His persiflage was often a mask for keen and just criticism, his burlesque fantasies were apt to be satires in disguise. He wielded an immense power, which he never abused, applying it to ends not very lofty, indeed, but never dishonest or degrading. He lived in a corrupt world, not as a moralist or censor, but as a keen good-humoured observer. He was a frivolous chronicler of a frivolous phase of life; but there was matter and method in his frivolity.

The yearly volumes in which his articles are collected, under the title of "Soirées Parisiennes," form an anecdotic history of the French stage from 1874 to 1884, quite unique in its value and variety. The period was one of great activity and fertile in important events. It fell to Mortier's lot to chronicle the solemn revivals of "Hernani," "Ruy Blas," and "Le Roi s'amuse;" the production of Augier's "Madame Caverlet" and "Les Fourchambault;" of Dumas' "L'Etrangère" and "La Princesse de Bagdad;" of Sardou's "Dora," "Les Bourgeois de Pont d'Arcy," "Daniel Rochat," "Divorçons!" and "Fédora;" of Feuillet's "Le Sphinx;" of Pailleron's "L'Age Ingrat" and "Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie;" of "L'Assommoir" and "Nana;" of "La Fille de Roland," "Les Noces d'Attila" and "Rome Vaincue;" of "Les

Deux Orphelines" and "Une Cause Célèbre;" of "Le Tour du Monde en 80 Jours," and "Michel Strogoff;" not to mention the hundred farces and operettas which have set all Europe and America laughing and dancing for the last ten years. To glance over Mortier's ten volumes is to assist at the making, as it were, of a decade of theatrical history, not French merely, but world-wide.

His style is too colloquial, too allusive, too Parisian, to be readily translateable, yet I must try to give, in translation or paraphrase, a few specimens of his manner.

On March 11, 1874, Flaubert's "Le Candidat" is produced at the Vaudeville. Flaubert, Mortier tells us, had great difficulties with the censorship as to his political allusions, and complained of them to Victor Hugo, who comforted him by relating an experience of his own. In "Hernani" one of the stage directions ran thus: "Le théâtre représente Saragosse, la ville aux cent clochers," upon which the censor made the following remarkable note, "La vue de Saragosse est autorisée, *mais pas celle des clochers*." A fine distinction!

"In almost all the plays of Feuillet," says Mortier, *àpropos* of "Le Sphinx," "there is to be found either a ruined castle, or a moonlit park with immemorial trees, or a precipice, or a torrent. The reason is that Feuillet is a passionate admirer of Walter Scott, whom he reads and re-reads untiringly. When he starts on a journey, his first requirement is not his portmanteau, it is his Walter Scott. He has Walter Scotts of all shapes and sizes: town Walter Scotts and country Walter Scotts, pocket Walter Scotts, and Walter Scotts for reading in bed; in short, Walter Scotts for all possible purposes"—except to profit by, one might add, in respect of morals and healthy human interest.

Here is an anecdote of the elder Dumas. "A new comedy of his was to be produced at the Odéon. On the previous evening they had been playing 'Le Gladiateur,' by Soumet, of which Dumas made great fun, asserting that, when the piece was over, they had to awaken the sleepers with clubs in order to clear the theatre. In the middle of Dumas' own play, one of the audience was observed to be sound asleep. 'Hallo!' said some one, 'there's a sleeper here, too!' 'Parbleu!' cried the author of the 'Mousquetaires,' 'it's one left over from yesterday.'"

In treating of that Gargantuan play, "L'Ami Fritz," Mortier

places the different sections of his article under the headings of a *menu*, and concludes with the following epigram :—

*Moralité.*
Ce soir, des siffleurs conjurés
Les auteurs craignaient la mitraille.
Messieurs, vous voici rassurés :
On ne siffle pas quand on bâille.

The following *mot*, purporting to have been overheard during an entr'acte at the first performance of "L'Etrangère," compresses into a nutshell all that can be said of the piece from a technical point of view: "Il me semble que l'Etrangère est surtout étrangère . . . . à l'action."

Dumas *fils* supplies Mortier with many of his brightest paragraphs and pages. It seems that when a young author brings a play to Alexandre the Greatest, and requests his advice or collaboration, Dumas reads the play and sends for the author. "I don't like your dénouement," he says. "Now, I can tell you of ten other possible dénouements"—and he proceeds to enumerate them. "Which of these do you prefer?" asks the author. "None of them." "But surely there must be *one* good dénouement." "Certainly." "What is it, then?" "Ah, *that* I keep to myself."

Whoever wishes to see Mortier at his best should read his articles upon such great events as the jubilee revival of "Le Roi s'amuse," or the stormy first-night of "Daniel Rochat." He gives us precisely what he professes to give—the full effect of the momentous "soirée." We feel as if we had been actually present—nay, we know much more of the incidents and emotions of the evening, before and behind the scenes, than we could have done had we been present as simple unprivileged spectators. These articles, terse though they be, are far too long to translate ; otherwise I should be tempted to reproduce one in full as the best way of conveying an adequate idea of Mortier's talent.

His records of first-nights, though the most important part of his work, did not absorb his whole activity. They were interspersed with papers on all sorts of theatrical matters, always of a humorous and often of a satiric cast. Francisque Sarcey introduces into one of his *feuilletons* a phrase of unmistakable theatrical slang ; at once Mortier is prepared with a reduction to absurdity of the innovation, in the shape of a supposed criticism by Sarcey, couched entirely in the most ludicrous jargon

of the *coulisses*. Henri de Lapommeraye, the critic of the *France*, in his despair over "Daniel Rochat," remarks that he is tempted to break his pen. Mortier, in an article headed "La Plume Brisée," depicts the consternation supposed to have been caused throughout Paris and the world at large by a rumour that this appalling threat had been put in execution. Coquelin and Sarah Bernhardt are perpetually the subjects of his good-humoured raillery; nor are the leading figures of the political world exempt from it. All the incidents and follies of the day, in short, which could by any means be brought into relation with the theatre, afforded food for his inventive wit and his inexhaustible fantasy.

Even for the most serious historian of the French drama, Mortier's writings contain many valuable hints. I may quote, for instance, the following account of the origin of Sardou's "Dora" ("Diplomacy")—an account to be taken with a grain of salt, no doubt, yet clearly embodying the main facts of the case, and presenting, as Mortier often does, an interesting glimpse into the workshop of a great French dramatist:—

"For twelve years Sardou had this work in his portfolio—not such as we have seen it this evening, of course, but as a mere scenario.

"Only 'Dora' was then a great melodrama, called 'L'Espionne,' and ended tragically.

"It was this dénouement which troubled him most, for he considered death to be a dénouement only for people who could not invent any other. So he had laid the piece aside, and thought no more of it.

"No, I am wrong, he could not help thinking of it; for there came a time when his business took him every day to Versailles. There his muse was in perpetual contact with politics. Daily he said to himself: 'There is a type, there is a speech; ready-made for my 'Espionne.'

"But it was the framework of the piece which he could not hit upon. This Spy, who was to furnish a rôle for Fargueil, still remained too dark and too melodramatic.

* * * * *

"Meanwhile he made the acquaintance of a charming widow who happened to be fulfilling in Paris the exact function of Fargueil's

rôle. But the real spy was as gay, careless, easy-going, as the spy of Sardou's imagination was dismal.

"'Oho!' said Sardou to himself, 'there is a study to be made here.'

"And he made it.

"It is needless to mention the Government for which the new model was working. Suffice it to say that another Government, having in its interests the deception of this excellent lady, threw in her path a delightful young man, extremely well up in diplomatic affairs and widely acquainted with the political world, who kept her well supplied with intelligence, which she immediately despatched abroad.

"All this intelligence was false . . . . Sardou was seeking a comedy. He had found one. But his dénouement still plagued him.

"The author of 'Dora' went to spend the winter at Nice, a holiday resort of politics. The society of Nice, fertile in varied types, furnished a scintillating first act.

"'I must really do the 'Espionne,' he said to himself. 'I have a first act. That's something.'

"Scarcely had he made this resolution when a process of transformation familiar to all dramatic authors effected itself in his brain.

"'What folly,' thought he, 'to have made my spy the pivot of my piece. She has only to become a secondary character to alter the whole thing. My heroine, deceived by her first lover, must become an excellent wife, whose husband must, throughout two acts, believe her guilty of political espionnage. I have it. What a delicious rôle for Pierson. And he set to work.

"He introduced successively into his picture all the types studied in Paris, at Nice, and Versailles. *I could give their names and addresses.* Only in some cases two living characters have been fused into a single part."

Is such work as Mortier's possible in England? Scarcely; and that for many reasons. Our theatre does not (as yet) fill a large enough place in the national life either as a literary or a social institution. Neither our plays, our actors, nor our audiences afford sufficient matter for the "frivolous chronicler," nor is there so large a public as in France to interest itself in his chronicles. Finally—and this is perhaps the insuperable obstacle—our speech

is English, not French. We should be sorry to exchange the "Areopagitica" and "The Ancient Mariner" for an eternity of "Soirées Parisiennes;" but our idiom has the defects of its qualities. It does not readily effervesce; and a London "Soirée," instead of frothing and sparkling like one of Mortier's champagne draughts, would be apt to assume the solid consistency of Sam Weller's typically British "swarry."

# Lucius Junius Brutus on the Stage.

By Frederick Hawkins.

IT was not until long after the revival of the regular drama in western Europe that the subject of the tragedy just brought out by Mr. Wilson Barrett came to be fully treated for the theatre. Few pages of the real or supposed history of Rome, indeed, could have appeared so fascinating to the playwriter as those devoted to the very remarkable statesman who saved himself from an early death by feigning imbecility, whose fierce resentment at the outrage perpetrated upon Lucretia led to the overthrow of the ancient monarchy, and who, invested with almost supreme power in the sort of republic then established, caused his two sons to be put to death for having joined a conspiracy to restore the fallen and discredited régime. If, preferring the guidance of Livy to that of Plutarch, Shakespeare and Corneille had represented the last-mentioned incident as what it probably was, the result of a subordination of the strongest impulses of paternal affection to a sense of public duty, no bounds could be set to the impression they would have produced. But the temptation to introduce the striking figure of Brutus in its entirety had to be firmly resisted by those illustrious poets and their contemporaries, unless, of course, they were content to work for merely posthumous fame. None of the sovereigns under whom they lived would have tolerated the performance of a tragedy relating in any way to the substitution of a republic for a monarchy. In the halcyon days

of the drama, therefore, the most dramatic events in the life of Lucius Junius Brutus were left untouched—a curious instance of the injury done to literature by a despotic government. Lucretia, however, was not unfrequently seen on the stage. In France she became the heroine of at least three tragedies—one by Nicolas Filleul, another by Duryer, and the next by Urbain Chevreau. Duryer's piece was marked by a realism singularly at variance with the spirit of old French tragedy. Sextus, poignard in hand, prosecuted his nefarious purpose ; Lucretia rushed away, her persecutor followed, faint cries were heard from behind the scenes, and the outraged woman reappeared to utter a significant speech. In Chevreau's "Lucrèce," it may be noticed, Tarquin is persistently spoken of as Emperor of Rome, although the author was then deep in researches for an elaborate history of the world.

Nat Lee was the first to break the silence so long observed by the dramatic poets in regard to the "avenger of woman's honour." In 1681, a little more than thirty years after the close of the Civil Wars, he wrote for the theatre in Dorset Gardens a "Lucius Junius Brutus, the Father of his Country." Like some portions of his "Alexander the Great," it has the unquestionable merit of being largely free from the rant by which his plays are usually disfigured, and which has won for him the unenviable appellation of the "roarer." His groundwork is not entirely original, the scene of Brutus's assumed fatuity having been suggested by that between Hamlet and Polonius, and other incidents by Madeleine de Scudéri's once famous romance of "Clélie." How the piece was acted may be inferred from the fact that Betterton and his wife undertook the chief characters, supported by Smith as Titus and Mrs. Barry as Teraminta. But the author and the players did not meet with the reward they expected. Charles II., who reduced the liberty of the drama and the press to a nullity, regarded "Lucius Junius Brutus" as inimical to the interests of the monarchy ; and we may fairly presume that a few lines spoken by Teraminta of the Roman king—

> To lie at home and languish for a woman !
> No, Titus ; he that makes himself thus vile,
> Let him not dare pretend to aught that's princely—

did not induce him to waive his objections to the piece from a

political point of view. He prohibited it on the third night, avowedly on account of its anti-regal tendencies. Louis XIV., to do him justice, proved less narrow-minded in an analogous matter than his brother monarch. He would allow such a story to be illustrated on the stage if it were not put forth as one of modern times. Catherine Bernard, a pensioned convert to Roman Catholicism, took advantage of the comparative freedom thus conceded to the dramatists, and a "Brutus" from her pen was one of the novelties given at the Comédie Française in 1690. Fontenelle, unsuccessful in both tragedy and comedy, had ceased to write for the theatre, but is believed to have aided her with his counsel in the elaboration of the work. Be that as it may, her "Brutus" had the then considerable number of twenty-five representations, though fiercely criticized from the outset by the cognoscenti of Paris. Possibly mindful of this success, Gildon gave what he deemed a more dramatic form to Lee's tragedy, at the same time taking particular care to exclude any passage which might be interpreted as a sneer against the monarchy. The Master of the Revels, however, declined to pass the piece, for what reason we are not told. Gildon forthwith turned it into a story of Florence in the fifteenth century, elevated Cosmo di Medici to the dignity of being its hero, and had it brought out at Drury Lane in 1703 under the title of "The Patriot, or an Italian Conspiracy." Here, as in Mdlle. Bernard's "Brutus," Lucretia does not appear.

From Gildon's ruthless perversion of history we pass at one bound to the most successful attempt yet made by a dramatist to grapple with the difficulties of the theme in question, the "Brutus" of Voltaire. It was during his first exile that the brilliant Frenchman entered upon this onerous task. "My 'Brutus,'" he writes to "Milord" Bolingbroke, "is, as you know, a native of England. You will remember that while staying at Wandsworth with my friend M. Falkener, that worthy and virtuous citizen," soon to blossom into a diplomatist at Constantinople, "I wrote in English prose the first act of this piece, giving it very much the same form it at present assumes. Now and then I spoke to you about it, and we were both surprised that no Englishman should have treated a subject which of all others, perhaps, is the most suitable to your stage." Some years afterwards, in a foot-note to this passage, he says :—"There is a

'Brutus' by a writer named Lee, but it has fallen into oblivion." The new "Brutus" was to be completed under circumstances not anticipated by its author. Mdlle. Lecouvreur died without having renounced her profession, and, in accordance with the rules laid down by the Church for such cases, was buried at midnight, like a dog. Goaded beyond endurance by the indignity offered to her remains, Voltaire, who by that time had returned to Paris, wrote a vivid description in verse of the scene, at the same time "reproaching the French nation for its cowardice in bending its neck to the detestable yoke" imposed upon it by the priesthood. He then deemed it expedient to conceal himself at Rouen, where, believing that a great success at the theatre was necessary to protect him from the hostility of the Church, he went on with the unfinished parts of his tragedy. "Brutus" appeared at the Comédie Française towards the end of 1730. Having been twice imprisoned without trial in the Bastille—on the second occasion at the instance of a noble who, after subjecting him to a gross indignity, abjectly declined to cross swords with him—and filled with a genuine and thoughtful admiration of the comparative freedom he witnessed in England, the poet naturally imparted considerable force to any passage in defence of popular rights, though he had no wish that such rights should be enjoyed except under "l'ombrage sacré du pouvoir monarchique." His zeal for liberty, however, alienated the bulk of the audience from the play. It is true that the people had made themselves merry over the funeral convoy of Louis XIV.; but Louis XV., "perhaps the most worthless creature monarchy ever corrupted," had yet to be generally known as the "bien-aimé." Murmurs of indignation were to be heard in the house when verses like the subjoined fell upon the ear:—

> Je suis fils de Brutus, et je porte, en mon cœur,
> La liberté gravée, et les rois en horreur.

Nor did the character of the father enlist as much sympathy as might have been expected. His inexorable determination was held to be less excusable than the ebullition of fury in which the younger Horace stabs his sister. It would even seem that the condemnation of Titus was thought too repulsive an incident to be represented in a theatre. In a word, "Brutus" proved a dire failure, especially as Mdlle. Dangeville, the sprightliest soubrette of her time, was unable to give due effect to a character with which,

impressed with a conviction that Nature had intended her for tragedy, she had induced the author to entrust her, that of Tullie. Nevertheless, Voltaire was to have no reason to regret that he had written the piece. In the course of a few years it became a portion of the repertory of the Comédie, and was translated into more languages than any other tragedy from his pen. In truth, the merits it possessed were not of a kind and degree to escape notice very long. Excellent in construction and versification, it forms a striking picture of what the poet essayed to paint—so striking, indeed, that Corneille himself would hardly have disavowed it. "Within the conditions of the French classic drama," as John Morley says, "Voltaire's Romans are high and stately figures."

As might be expected, this impressive tragedy soon found its way to the English stage. In substance, though not in precisely the same shape, it was reproduced by Duncombe, one of the earliest translators of "Athalie," at Drury Lane in 1734, Mills representing Brutus. First a clergyman, next a doctor, and finally a professed poet, Hugh Downman printed a historical play, "Lucius Junius Brutus, or the Expulsion of the Tarquins," in 1779, but could not induce the actors to bring it out. His ill-success with them may have been caused by a circumstance which is much to his honour. He had the courage to write in a then discredited form of verse. "There are not wanting many good judges of composition," he says, "who wish that the less studied diction, the more plain and level metre, of the school of Shakspere had been continued to the present time." Unfortunately for him, the good judges of composition were in a hopeless minority. No less unattractive in the eyes of the players was a tragedy on the subject by Cumberland, entitled "The Sibyl, or the Elder Brutus," and included in the long-deferred collection of his posthumous works. However well sustained the part of the Sibyl may be, it was as clearly out of place in a modern drama as the Chorus would have been, and its introduction in a piece intended for the stage at the end of the eighteenth century is in marked contrast with the practical sagacity which distinguishes the "Wheel of Fortune," the "West Indian," and many other pieces by the same hand.

In the days of Edmund Kean the patriotic Roman was again to the fore. Formerly known to fame as a dramatist, but now

chiefly remembered as the author of "Home, Sweet Home," which he wrote in a miserable attic in Paris for the opera of "Clari," John Howard Payne, by birth an American, prepared a "Brutus" for that illustrious actor, who appeared in it at Drury Lane in 1818. Never, perhaps, had so curious a piece of patchwork been exposed to criticism in a theatre. It was composed almost exclusively of selections from the plays I have mentioned. Lee and Gildon, Voltaire and Duncombe, Downman and Cumberland, were freely laid under contribution. But any defects the work may have had were obscured by the expressive and vivid acting of Kean in the principal character. "His name," it has been written, "might descend in all honour to posterity on the merits of his scene in sentencing Titus to death. It was a picture impressive and even appalling in its reality. His stern but saddened look, his mental agony in the conflict between a father's affection and a patriot's duty, his burst of anguish in uttering the word 'pris-on-er,' his reply to Titus, 'How should you die, but as *traitors* die,' the convulsive movement with which he gave the signal for the decapitation,—all was great." No other actor, according to one of the critics, "could stand silently on the stage for minutes together, and, by calling up in succession all the shades and degrees of passion into his countenance, move his audience to tears of the truest sympathy."

From one point of view, let it be added, the result of Mr. Barrett's experiment in producing the late Lord Lytton's "Brutus" will be awaited with considerable interest. Notwithstanding the success of "The Cup," it is still a matter of doubt whether a dramatist of our time is well advised in resorting for his inspiration to the history and legends of antiquity. Latter-day audiences have shown little or no taste for such themes, and the art of wearing a Greek or Roman dress with good effect has ceased to be numbered among the necessary accomplishments of the player. It may be of significance in this connection, too, that Mr. Irving has not yet given us his promised revival of "Coriolanus," although his preparations for it were made as far back as 1879. But we may reasonably hope that the new "Brutus" will help to dispel instead of being damaged by this curious prejudice against what are rather vaguely called classical plays. Much as Lord Lytton's gifts have been overrated, they were not unequal to a powerful illustration of the story in question, and the flavour of pedantry

in his style may jar less upon us here than it does in the "Lady of Lyons" and "Richelieu." If he borrowed anything from a predecessor it was probably from the author of "Zaïre" and "Mérope," for whose tragedies he entertained a profound admiration. "He often maintained," writes John Forster, "the marked superiority of Voltaire over all his countrymen in the knowledge of dramatic art and the power of producing theatrical effect." In addition to any merits his "Brutus" may have, it will be put on the stage in such a way as to bring before us a superb picture of ancient Rome, and the representative of Lucius Junius has shown a special aptitude for "classical" characters. Perhaps—who can tell?—Mr. Barrett's name may come to be associated with another rush of plays relating to antiquity, with a new chapter in the history of the English acted drama.

# "Out of the Depths."

[*Poem for Recitation.*]

LIGHTNING, and thunder, and tempest!
And high, over hill and dale,
The gulls are blown about, like chaff,
All in the whitening gale!

The gulls are blown about like chaff:
The blown foam surges free;
Christ save the sailors, one and all,
That sail to-night on the sea!

A league or more from the rock-bound shore,
Where the billows foam and leap,
Lonely and still, the lighthouse stands,
Like the figure of God on the deep.

Like the figure of God on the raging sea,
Serene, in shadow and light;
A pillar of cloud by day it stands,
And a pillar of fire by night!

The high seas sweep; the house stands still;
It braves the tempest's power;
God guide the hand that trims the lamp
In the lonely lighthouse tower!

God guide the hand of the girl that trims,
For her father is well-nigh blind;
And he hardly hears, with his dying ears,
The roaring of the wind.

"Stay with me, child!" the old man cried,
"And kneel beside my bed;
For faint am I, and like to die:
Stay with me, child!" he said.

And the maiden clasped her hands in prayer,
And fervently prayed she
For her father, a-low on his dying bed,
And her lover, a-far on the sea!

O pity the sailors upon the deep,
For never a star have they!
And the lamp gleams dim through the blinding foam
And the clouds of the flying spray!

"Stay with me, child!" the old man cried,
"And kneel beside my bed:
For faint am I, and like to die:
Stay with me, child!" he said.

But soft! what light is this he sees?
What sound is this he hears?
Well known the light to the mariner's eyes,
And the sound to the seaman's ears!

A light of distress—the minute-gun!
Up on his couch he sat:
"What light was that, my child?" he cried:
"My child, what sound was that?"

"A ship in distress—a ship on the reef,
And the tempest is raging wild!"
"Below the lifeboat lies," he cried,
"Haste! haste! and go! my child."

"Nay, father, nay: tho' he I love
Out of the depths should cry,
Beside thy bed thy child will stand,
To tend thee, till thou die!"

He kissed her with his death-cold lips:
"The lifeboat lies below:
The God of might make strong thine hand!
My child, I *bid* thee go!"

Again he saw the flashing light,
And heard the booming gun:
She looked into his dying eyes:
"Father, thy will be done."

Out—thro' the raging storm she passed:
Out—thro' the blinding night:
No more he heard the booming gun,
Or saw the flashing light.

The hurricane howled: the breakers roared:
Into the yawning main,
Where down to death a hundred sank,
One only rose again!

On seas, without a sail to save—
To skies, without a star—
One only rose, with bleeding hands
To clutch a broken spar!

Far-off, the lonely lighthouse shone:
Upon its ghostly gleam—
As in a trance—his eyes were fixed—
As in a drowning dream!

"No, no," he moaned, "I shall not die,
For Christ is still with me!
See—see—His shining Spirit comes,
To save me, on the Sea!

"He comes: He stands beside: He bends
His loving arms to save!
He drags my drowning body up
Out of its dreary grave!

"He lifts me from my dreary grave,
And takes me to His rest!
I feel His arms about my neck,
My head upon His breast!

"He stoops: He saves: I shall not die!"
One upward glance he threw:
He gazed into his saviour's eyes—
"Kate, darling! Is it you?"

She dragged him from the drowning deep
With Love's almighty power:
She rowed him, thro' the foaming seas,
Back to her lonely tower.

She wrapt him in her father's cloak:
She breathed a fitful prayer:
She bore him, with the strength of Love,
Up the steep tower-stair!

Then softly to her father's side:
But lo! from overhead
The lamplight streamed upon his face,
Happy, and calm, and dead.

Happy, like one asleep, he lay;
Like one in sleep who smiled;
And claspèd were his hands as when,
Dying, he blessed his child!

The lightning ceased: the thunder died:
No more the tempest raved:
Beside his bed the lovers knelt—
The saviour and the saved.

And all night long, in the lighthouse tower,
When the clouds were blown abroad,
The stars shone down on the quick and the dead—
The lighthouse lamps of God!

SAMUEL K. COWAN, M.A.

# More of Mr. Yates's Theatrical Recollections.

By Godfrey Turner.

I RE-OPEN the first volume of Mr. Edmund Yates's "Recollections and Experiences," pretty nearly at the page where I closed it when finishing my paper in the January number of this magazine. Had I not chanced on the spot I left abruptly two months ago, I should have sought it by help of the excellent index; for the old Adelphi, most cramped, stuffy, and inconvenient of playhouses, as Mr. Yates candidly declares it to have been, is first and fairest in my early affection. With the Yates epoch I had well-nigh done, and was on the point of closing its record with the final reference to the "Buckstone Burlettas;" but there are two or three straggling threads to be yet drawn together. To that extraordinary woman, Celeste Elliott, popularly known as Madame Celeste, the author of "Recollections and Experiences" does generous justice.

Early in life she attained a great influence over Benjamin Webster, which, during all the long years of its duration, was never exercised, I believe, save for his good. Full of natural energy and resource, full of French excitement and *élan*, knowing all the inside life of her profession, as one who has lived in it from childhood only can, of indomitable will and untiring working power, she made a most admirable head of the Adelphi establishment which, under her direction, flourished abundantly.

Celeste, French by birth and parentage, emigrated to America, and there married, while yet but a child, one Elliott, connected in some subordinate *in*capacity with theatrical affairs. She came over to England without a word of English, and essayed to gain a livelihood as a pantomimist and dancer. Her pantomime was perfect in its grace and mute eloquence of meaning. She could be intensely pathetic in dumb-show. Mr. Edmund Yates says she played in "The French Spy," having no word to utter on the stage. But I can just remember though I did not see her first appearance at the Adelphi, and it was in "The Wept of the Wishton Wish," a piece written for her by Bernard. From the heroine's long simulation of dumbness, the deprivation becomes fixed on her, together with a frenzied forgetfulness, and it is only

in her dying moments, when clasping her little boy, that she regains sense, memory, and speech. The two words "My child!" were the extent of her "study." Leigh Hunt, recording this performance in the *Tatler* of November 22, 1831, said:

> Mdlle. Celeste is made a dumb heroine, we presume, because she is unable to speak English. She ventures on the two words just mentioned, in the dying-scene, and by dint of not being bound to say them out loud, manages them very well. We thought they became even the more touching on account of the foreign caution with which she spoke them. Her pantomime is striking, and her dancing very much so; she has also a fine earnest countenance, and looks remarkably well in the disguise of the young cavalier.

Though I was nearly seven years old at this time, and a precocious playgoer, I was somehow debarred from seeing Celeste till some time afterwards. It was not at the Adelphi, but the Haymarket, in a piece taken from the French, and entitled "Victor and Hortense." Webster and she were the principal performers. He played a man of noble birth, reduced to the position of a gamekeeper; she a charming and imperious *parvenue*, wealthy and ambitious of social distinction, mistress of herself and a fine château. Celeste always had the greatest difficulty in making her English intelligible. One of her speeches in this Haymarket piece I remember. "Ouat beezness has a gamkeepare wiz sus faine eyes?" Her beautifully pale and clear complexion, her regular and naturally pencilled eyebrows and long dark eyelashes, absolved her in great degree from the necessity of making-up. If it be true, as I remember to have been told, that she put the now universal black edge round her flashing eyes, she did it so carefully that there was none of the coarse and unnaturally staring effect which many actresses of the present day seem to think as necessary to characterization as yellow hair, lips like sealing-wax, and a diamond necklace. But I am slow to believe that Celeste ever depended to any considerable extent on those clumsy artifices common among women who are vainly, though perhaps naturally, dissatisfied with their own charms. The "fine earnest countenance" remarked in her youth remained, with her grace and suppleness of figure, to the last. I saw her at the funeral of Paul Bedford, and was asked by the late Mr. Christopher Pond, "Who is that handsome, elegant lady?" When I told him "Madame Celeste," he stared in bewilderment and incredulity. "She does not look more than thirty," said he. Those who have seen her as Miami in "The Green Bushes" may remember a little incidental

action, which is quite a gymnastic feat, but which was accomplished by her with such perfect ease and seeming unconsciousness that its real difficulty was not perceptible. Squatting, Indian fashion, on the ground with her legs crossed, she rose to her feet without the aid of her hands. Young people perform the trick with constrained and palpable effort, leaning forward and extending the arms to get the upward start. When last the original Miami appeared, she must have been at least sixty, and she rose from her sitting attitude on the stage in the old lissome manner.

"Delightful Mr. Bedford," as the actor who impersonated *himself* with wonderful exactness is rather sarcastically called by Mr. Edmund Yates, assisted in the introductory sketch which was written by this gentleman, at the request of Mr. Webster, for the opening of the New Adelphi. The following is a highly characteristic reminiscence :—

I have forgotten all about it now, save that it was a dialogue in verse, introducing all the members of the company, with special reference to them, their position, and peculiarities ; and that on the first night the whole effect of this was marred through the crass stupidity of Mr. Paul Bedford, who did not know one line which had been set down for him, and who, to my horror, adopted an improvisation of his own, beginning : "Stop the cart, stop the cart, dear kids, stop the cart ; let old Paul have something to say to you."

There was another actor in Paul Bedford's time who ran him close in the never-varying anti-mimetic line. This was the egregious Mr. Robert Romer. I saw him first at the Strand Theatre, in "Othello, according to Act of Parliament." He played the ghost of Desdemona in the last scene. Like Mr. Bedford, he "had not the faintest notion of impersonation." His peculiarity was the frequent use, in the middle of a sentence, of the interjection "Ha!" with a smack of his lips, and a brief exhibition of his front teeth, which resembled those of a horse. He had also a trick of caressing his funnel-shaped nose with the side of his straightened forefinger. Mr. Yates has cruelly left him out in the cold, perhaps because the stories concerning him are too well known. It was funny to see him play an Irishman, and to hear him say, without the least attempt at brogue, "Thunder! and, ha! *turf!*" He was once the virtuous yeoman of a rustic drama, and, in a tone of business-like affability, thus addressed, with a pleasant wave of his hand, the libertine of the piece, "Ha! take a father's curse—take a father's curse." During an inert and depressed period of the Adelphi management, when the staging was deplorable and the supernumeraries

were a by-word, Bob Romer, as he was commonly called, was cast for the most ludicrously inappropriate parts. In a certain drama, four gay young students, clinking their cannikins at a table in a tavern porch, were represented by veterans whose united ages amounted to more than 250 years. It was at this lively epoch of the Adelphi stage, when high-mettled youth flaunted in the venerable figures of Messieurs Webster, Stuart, Eburne, and Paul Bedford, that the wide realm of general utility was occupied by the portly presence of Mr. Romer. Elsewhere he once played Othello—seriously. It was a private performance, and the Iago was a respectable, fat, and elderly solicitor, mild and benevolent of aspect, but given to the utterance of heavy and tedious platitudes in a loud, high key. The little theatre in Dean Street, known down even to that time as Miss Kelly's, was hired for the occasion. Every line spoken by the Moor and his Ancient was loudly chaffed. Othello's address to the Senate was delivered amid a running fire of personalities. "That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter, it is most true," was met with, "Oh, Bob, oh! For shame, Bob! You ought to know better!" The further statement, "True, I did marry her," called forth remarks such as "Quite right, Bob! Very proper proceeding on your part. Least you could do, Bob, under the circumstances!" And the words, "Rude am I in speech," drew forth protests of "Not at all, Bob, not at all! Don't say so, Bob! Quite the contrary!"

Mr. Yates closes his recollections of the Adelphi with a reference to the last performance—it was in the *New*, not the Old Adelphi, by-the-by, of "the Surrey trash of Black-Eyed Susan," the veteran T. P. Cooke revisiting the glimpses of the foot-lights to play his famous part of William. The occasion was part of Charles Dickens's scheme to raise a fund for the benefit of Douglas Jerrold's widow and family. Having quoted a phrase in which Jerrold's nautical melodrama is broadly described as "trash," I will merely say that the sentence was passed on Jerrold's work by Jerrold himself, in the pages of *Punch*. In the Adelphi performance "the part of the Admiral," says Mr. Yates, "who presides over the court-martial by which the hero William is condemned to death, was played by a stolid-faced creature, a brother of Paul Bedford. Dickens said to me at supper that night, 'I had a strong idea that Bedford's brother meant to acquit William, and

that all the rest of the play would go to the devil!'" Reminiscences of Her Majesty's and Covent Garden, both being devoted to Italian Opera; of Drury Lane, the Haymarket, Lyceum, Princess's, Olympic, St. James's, Sadler's Wells, Marylebone, Surrey, and Victoria, follow Mr. Yates's earlier recollections of the paternal house, the Adelphi. He recalls the famous *pas de quatre* danced by Taglioni, Cerito, Carlotta Grisi, and Lucille Grahn, as also the witching *pas*, "La Truandaise," danced by the third on this Terpsichorean list, with Perrot, "a little, ugly, pock-marked man, but a marvellous pantomimist." I am glad to know that so young-looking a man as my old friend highly esteems good dancing, for I am convinced that his sons and mine can have not the faintest notion what such grace as that of Taglioni and Lucille Grahn can really have been. The floating passiveness of the first, whose feet scarcely touched the stage, and the extraordinary grace, in spite of the equally extraordinary height of the second, are shadows of the past. Those who admire the muscular school of—well, *not* dancing, but its modern substitute, which favours the development of cordage in the calves, will laugh me to scorn when I say that the dancer of this day who most reminds me of Taglioni—of course at a vast distance, and, I may be pardoned for saying, in spite of a little affected shake of the body, which answers to a twang or brogue of speech—is Emma D'Auban, now engaged I believe at a music-hall. In her I recognize a touch—a faint touch it may be—of the fluent, rhythmic ease and delicate emphasis of Taglioni. Names such as (the) William Farren, Strickland, David Rees, James Vining, Walter Lacy, Charles Mathews, Harley, James Anderson, Macready, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Nisbett, Miss P. Horton, Madame Vestris, Miss Julia St. George, and Miss Kathleen Fitzwilliam occur and recur, sadly to some of us, I ween. Miss Charlotte Cushman is mentioned, but only just mentioned, twice. I will myself say of her that her *début* in London was one of my "first nights." James Kenney, son of the farcical genius who wrote "Love, Law, and Physic," and elder brother of the Charles Lamb Kenney of recent days, had dragged me into the pit of the Princess's, to see a new American actress in whom he took an interest. Remember, no stalls had encroached on the pit of that period; nor were first nights then like first nights now. The art of packing the house by hypocritical tales of long-booking—though, in two or three nights,

probably, the librarians may be giving away the tickets in which they have speculated—had not been invented. Since Edmund Kean played Shylock, and took by storm an audience that half-filled a few front rows, there surely was never a thinner house. Milman's "Fazio" was the play; Miss Cushman the Bianca. A mildly capable tragedian, named Graham, who struggled manfully against deficiencies of figure and voice, played the despicable hero; and Oxberry, as the dying miser, in the first act, startled the house by a piece of dramatic intensity scarcely excelled in later years, even by that wonderful little man, Robson, at his most Robsonian periods. The first appearance of the new actress was more remarkable than pleasing. Her profile positively caricatured that of Macready, the chin projecting so far as to suggest actual deformity. Miss Cushman's passion, expressed in a deep masculine voice, seemed to me forced and exaggerated. Nevertheless, I recognized strange power, and applauded as heartily, I daresay, as the rest. The critics were kind, and Miss Cushman in a little time filled the house. She was soon playing Romeo, with her sister Susan as Juliet. This was at the Haymarket, and afterwards at the Surrey. Meg Merrilies was another of her successful assumptions. Eccentric melodrama was her forte; she was fine, but rather unequal, in some tragic parts, among them Queen Katharine and Constance; and in comedy she was often ludicrous without intention. It will be seen that my gleanings from Mr. Yates's entertaining volumes are honest gleanings only. I have carried off none of his substantial crop. Before I close this paper, I will venture to correct one little error of fact. He says, "The abolition of fees to attendants, now so general, was introduced by Albert Smith." It is when speaking of the "Mont Blanc" entertainment, which was produced at the Egyptian Hall on the 15th of March, 1852, that my friend falls into this error. Now, Mr. Walter Watts, who lost money which was not his own, in theatrical speculation, hung himself in his cell in Newgate, in April of the year 1850. Before that dismal time he had produced a play in blank verse by Mr. George Henry Lewes, as well as other pieces, at the Olympic; and his management was distinguished throughout by a resolute determination to abolish the bad custom of fees. It was grimly odd that *he* should have made it a stipulation with his servants that if any of them were detected in receiving gratuities they might be discharged for "dishonesty."

# The Last Rosalind.

LET us try to arrive at some definite conclusion concerning what is, and what is not, "ideal" in the rendering of a well-known Shakesperian play. The term is often abused, frequently misunderstood, and apparently gives great offence to such as possess the intelligence to understand a character, all the tact to carry it to a fairly successful issue, but little of the nature that is identified with a highly poetic creation. If we have ever taken the trouble to read Shakespeare, and to study that delightful poetic fancy known as "As You Like It," we must, in our imagination at least, have formed some idea of Rosalind, have pictured her both at court and in her sylvan solitude, and conjured up the scenes in which her wayward, wandering life is set, aided by the imagery of the poet and the sweet sounds of the singer. The idea of Rosalind differs according to the temperament of the reader. But one thing is quite certain, and that is, that this is one of the few plays in which we need no adventitious aid to bring the beauty of the poem home to us. It is only when an actress is wholly unsuited to Rosalind that she requires to be bolstered up by the scene-painter and decorator. Dear me! How many Rosalinds have we not seen? Helen Faucit, in her declining years; Adelaide Nielson, in the full beauty of her youth; Mrs. Hermann Vezin, before she had quitted the Shakesperian scene, and departed into the regretted shades of silence; Marie Litton, determined to conquer the physical incapacity of a harsh and strident voice; Mrs. Scott-Siddons, long before she had acquired a boisterous style and an American accent; Mrs. Langtry, when in the early hours of her stage noviciate. Now not one of these modern Rosalinds—or rather the Rosalinds of modern times—could in the highest sense of the word be called ideal, and yet there is not a memory attached to one of them that is solely connected with scenic splendour or magnificence. We know not, nor do we care, what Haymarket canvas was used as a background for the representation of "As You Like It;" a Shakesperian revival at Drury Lane was invariably shabby. Managers of a past, but not forgotten era, spent more money on their acting than on their decoration; and it is untrue to assert that the best remembered revival at the Imperial Theatre made its mark entirely on account of the woodland pictures and stage accessories. They were beautiful no doubt, but they were

not everything. The Rosalind of Marie Litton and the Orlando of Kyrle Bellew stood out from their surroundings. They struck a light of fancy in the minds of their hearers, they brought the poem home to every one. The wheels of imagination were set working. Commonplace and vulgarity were for the moment dead.

Now, we are not ashamed to make a startling assertion. The most ideal Rosalind in existence has never played the character. If there is one actress who ever lived who must be Rosalind, it is surely Ellen Terry. Her manner, her temperament, her graciousness, as well as her grace, her light and delicate wit, her innate refinement, her poetical and imaginative spirit, her loving-tenderness, and her fine spirit of comedy, all point instinctively to a Rosalind as nearly ideal as stage representation can make her. By art, Ellen Terry may become Portia, or Desdemona, or Beatrice, or Imogen, or Viola; by nature, she *is* Ophelia and Rosalind. All this sounds extremely unfair. If we have not seen Ellen Terry as Rosalind, how can we say she can play the character? The study of Ellen Terry is the best answer. Those who have watched the Ellen Terry of her recent Shakesperian career, heard her voice, and been persuaded of her personality, and cannot identify her with Rosalind, know little of the actress and less of the character.

We may go further, and assert that if it be true that Ellen Terry is an ideal Rosalind, it is equally certain that Mrs. Kendal must be the direct opposite to the mind that has conceived a predetermined ideality. Mrs. Kendal in artistic temperament is the exact converse of Ellen Terry. She is her living antithesis. Both are artists in the highest sense of the word; but artists as opposed in tastes and feeling as Sir Frederick Leighton and W. P. Frith, Frederic Walker and Solomon Hart, Mason and J. R. Herbert. Ellen Terry can no more play Claire in "The Ironmaster," the Duchess in "The Ladies' Battle," Pauline in "The Lady of Lyons," or the heroines of Pinero's plays, than can Mrs. Kendal touch the Maiden in "Eugene Aram," the Queen in "Charles the First," or Camma in "The Cup." The one is old-fashioned and poetical; the other is modern and Philistine; the one looks best in old gowns, the other in new; the one is for the drawing-room, the other for the studio.

Mrs. Kendal should have known that no scenery or dresses in the world would make her an ideal Rosalind. She can do nothing that is not clever. She is an experienced actress. She understands

all the tricks and traditions of her art. She knows when to laugh and when to sigh. She is merry and clever and inoffensive, but she is not Rosalind in a single scene. She is a consummate actress, an admirable elocutionist, but she is never the Rosalind of the poet—the Rosalind of the stage always. She makes a very admirable background to the stage pictures, but Rosalind should be in the front and the pictures nowhere.

If therefore the modern personality of Mrs. Kendal is pronounced and emphatic, for what good purpose was "As You Like It" revived? The poem must be paramount, or the play is useless. All who assist Mrs. Kendal must necessarily do so laboriously. Who that knows anything about acting, or who has studied style, would associate Mr. Kendal with Orlando or Mr. Hare with Touchstone? though, strange to say, Mr. Hare is found to be best able in the whole company to divest himself of his modern tone and to throw himself into the quaint spirit of the character. Mr. Hare's Touchstone is after all one of the best performances in the revived Shakesperian play. But the majority of the company are modern actors—modern to the backbone. They have had no training or experience in the poetical or Shakesperian drama. Their very shortcomings are emphasized by the association with experienced actors like Mr. Hermann Vezin and Mr. Maclean, who alone made the words of Shakespeare travel to the ears of their audience. Over the rest let a dark curtain of forgetfulness be charitably thrown. Not all the dresses, the detail, the Wingfieldian researches, the Cellier music, the guards, the pomp, the hawks, the dogs, or the sheep-bells, could redeem them from the curse of tediousness and the grave charge of incapacity. They could not speak Shakespeare, nor could they understand him in order to speak. With few exceptions, they were awkward, prosy, dull, and unimaginative. The scene-painter and the dress-maker cannot make headway against these prosaic performers. The play sinks or rises according to the measure of their competency. And what is the result? It is summed up in the words of an able, well-tried, and experienced critic, who stood in the porch of the St. James's Theatre on the first night. "Honestly," said he, "I have studied 'As You Like It' all my life, and loved the poem from infancy; but I could not have conceived that a picked company of intelligent performers could so marvellously have succeeded in robbing it of every scintillation of its beauty, imagination, poetic fervour, and ideal charm!"

# Two 'neath a Tower.

"Ille terrarum mihi præter omnes angulus ridet!"

IN such a place to ponder
Two hearts when looking yonder
Might falter or grow fonder
Than other hearts have been.
But picture it, and tell me,
If any harm befell me,
What place of peace should knell me
To dreams, in worlds unseen!

One night, can you remember,
The last of white December,
When love re-lit the ember
That time was burning low,
Once more in soul united
God's moon above us lighted
The tower where we plighted
Our faith of long ago.

Oh! sad forgotten tower,
Thou hast the peace and power
To tell the storms that shower
Across thy sister-sea,
Look downward and behold us,
What mysteries enfold us,
Thou promised love, and told us
The present—and to be.

The present—we have felt it,
In flower-time we've smelt it,
In agony we've knelt it,
Bear witness if we lie,
The primrose blows soft kisses
To summer's cheek: earth misses
Love's sun; wild winter hisses
The wail—Eternity!

The Future—hear us praying,
Here where the world seems staying,
Give Love with no gainsaying,
Give Hope, that cannot cease.
If not—to her give pleasure,
Joy, blessings without measure,
For me, reserve thy treasure
Under thy grasses—Peace!

C. S.

# Our Musical-Box.

THERE has been quite a run on extraordinary children in the musical line of late. A long succession of crowded houses and "enthused" audiences has borne irrefutable testimony to the artistic merits of the juvenile company at the Savoy, to whose admirable performances I had occasion to refer at some length in the February number of this magazine. In the course of the past month—so I hear from Germany—little Ilona Eibenschuetz, the "ex-seven-year-old" pianist (she is only "rising eight" now), has been renewing her last year's triumphs in northern Europe; and Professor Schmitt of Vienna, probably the best piano-forte teacher living, has brought out two tiny soloists, of whose remarkable capacities Liszt and Rubinstein speak in terms of unqualified praise. One of them, indeed, a boy of nine named Pruewer, the great Canon of Albano describes as "a world's wonder," and, in a letter which has come under my notice, records a feat which certainly entitles its performer to rank as a marvel of musical precocity; namely, the transposition and faultless playing *at sight* by young Pruewer of one of John Sebastian Bach's "Great Fugues" for the clavichord. Another of Schmitt's pupils, by the way, Heinrich Janko, who is in his tenth year, has invented a new keyboard, the object of which is to facilitate *technique* by obviating certain difficulties of fingering in keys burdened with a plurality of sharps and flats; or, more accurately speaking, by rendering it feasible to finger any given passage in one way, no matter what key it be written in. I am assured on competent authority that this invention is no less notable for its simplicity than its ingenuity. It is pleasant, however, to reflect that even in the matter of precocious pianists England can hold her own even with Germany—at least just at the present moment—for, in the person of Pauline Ellice, a pupil of Leonhard Bach, the Prussian Court-Pianist, London possesses a Liliputian artist of quite exceptional ability, whose performances at the Promenade Concerts, given nightly in Her Majesty's Theatre, have for some time past constituted a leading attraction of those entertainments. It has been my privilege to hear this gifted child play in a private house, where her audience exclusively consisted of skilled musicians, professional and amateur. The ordeal was a severe one to be undergone by a maiden so tiny that huge pads had to be attached to the pedals of the Bluethner grand, on which she was called upon to perform, ere her small feet could attain their surface. Pauline is fair, golden-haired, and somewhat fragile-looking; her eyes are large and anxious; her complexion a delicate pink and white; she is decidedly a pretty child; but her features are stamped with that eager, restless expression so often seen on the face of precocious infancy. When seated at the piano deftly unravelling the tangled note-skeins of Chopin with her adroit fingers, she seems so entirely absorbed in her task of reproduction as to become quite unconscious of her surroundings. She

does not exhibit the slightest symptom of nervousness; on the contrary, she manifests that unaffected confidence in her capacities that is more frequently the privilege of gifted childhood than of accomplished maturity. Her playing reveals inborn musicality of no ordinary calibre, as well as wholesome and intelligent teaching; her touch is light, but firm; the quality and variety of her tone-production would do credit to a pianist twice her age; her execution is crisply articulate, and her phrasing singularly correct. What struck me particularly in her *Vortrag* was the amazing steadiness and reserved power of the left hand, in ten cases of twelve the weak point of juvenile pianism. Whilst absolutely free from the vice of thumping, this little girl's left hand supplies a solid and sonorous foundation for the edifices of melody and ornament wrought by her agile right. With two of the three *morçeaux* she executed in my presence I was as familiar as I am with the alphabet, and can conscientiously affirm that she neither missed nor misplayed a single note of either, but rendered both with just emphasis and satisfactory expression. I have dwelt, perhaps, somewhat over lengthily upon Pauline Ellice's feats on the clavichord, because, unless I be much mistaken, I recognize in her natural aptitudes which, properly cultivated and trained, will enable her a few years hence to take a station of honour in the foremost rank of English pianists. It is to be hoped that those who have brought her before the public at so early an age will not lay too heavy a strain upon her physical resources, which appear to me by no means inexhaustible.

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I cannot help thinking that the all-round efficiency with which Offenbach's "Barbe-Bleue" has been revived at the Comedy Theatre has scarcely received adequate acknowledgment at the hands of my colleagues of the daily and weekly press. As a matter of fact, this charming operetta—not one musical number of which is dull or insignificant—has been uncommonly well cast in Panton Street, and affords as pleasant an evening's entertainment as any musical piece at present given in London. Miss St. John's impersonation of the irrepressible, unteachable, rough-and-ready peasant-wench Boulotte—one of Offenbach's happiest creations—is so bright and clever that it may rank on terms of absolute equality with the never-to-be-forgotten renderings of that part with which the names of Hortense Schneider and Marie Geistinger are identified in the memories of middle-aged Offenbachians. The English Boulotte is better-looking than either of her foreign prototypes; her singing is unexceptionable; her high spirits, whilst delightfully boisterous, never for a moment degenerate into vulgarity. It would be difficult to play the grateful part of Popolani, the philanthropic poisoner, more amusingly than does Mr. Leslie, or to present a quainter appearance as that most henpecked of monarchs, King Bobêche, than does Mr. Roberts, whose antics and "gag" are intensely farcical. Mr. Bracy looks the handsome lady-killer (I speak by the card) to the life, and Mr. Kelleher presents a very agreeable impersonation of a royal shepherd, whose strong constitutional suit is native modesty. Miss Lottie Venne makes a sufficiently pert foundling Princess; M. Marius a somewhat over-boisterous Lord High Chamberlain; the minor parts of the

termagant Queen and her red-haired lover are satisfactorily sustained. On the whole, the performance is an exceptionally good one, and the operetta, teeming with good music and sparkling with inoffensive fun, offers a refreshing contrast to the melancholy and vulgar abortion, "Le Grand Mogul," that preceded it on the Comedy boards.

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"To the Palms," a new "cycle of melodies," or, in simpler parlance, set of songs composed during the past winter by Mr. Isidore de Lara, was introduced to public notice for the first time at an afternoon concert given by that talented young musician at the Steinway Hall on January 27. This is by far the most important work as yet given to the world by Mr. Lara, who in it proves himself capable of greater things than the mere setting of pretty words to sympathetic and graceful music. A vein of lofty and noble inspiration runs through his latest composition, entitling it to rank in the same category as the tone-poems of Schubert and Schumann. Obviously possessed by the strange beauty of the words he has chosen—an excerpt from Owen Meredith's "Lucile"—the composer has given musical expression to that beauty with extraordinary felicity. Where all is intrinsically excellent it may seem supererogatory to particularize; but to my mind the second and third episodes of the "cycle" are surpassingly attractive, teeming as they do with a cleverness that, beyond all question, is spontaneous, not studied. "Back, back to the Orient" is informed by a passionate longing that glows with true Eastern heat, whilst the luminous calm of the Desert night soothes and charms us in every bar of the succeeding melody, "Are the three intense stars?" Mr. de Lara sings his new set of songs to perfection; so admirably, indeed, that I cannot but regard him as a dangerous foe to their popularity—for who, having listened to his rendering of them, would venture to attempt their interpretation? On the occasion above referred to Mr. de Lara also sung several songs not of his own composing, amongst them one intituled "Alas!" by Luigi Caracciolo, in which that genial and fertile musician has struck a note of true and deep pathos. It is impossible to hear this lovely song unmoved; it appeals directly to those subtle human sympathies that underlie the dry prose of life, and have power to moisten it with the dew of tears. Delightful chansonnettes by Faure and Tosti, and a sweet setting of Tennyson's "Swallow," by Mrs. Moncrieff, were also inimitably rendered by the concert-giver, whose latest ballad, "Red and White," found the fittest imaginable exponent in Signorina Alice Barbi. Here, again, is a singer of drawing-room songs who fills the breasts of her sister-songstresses with admiring despair. How many times in his life is it given to a real music lover to be able, *la main sur le cœur*, to say of any vocal performance, "This is absolutely perfect singing?" I have been listening to all the best singers of my time ever since the days of my boyhood, when it was my good fortune to hear Charlotte Dolby and Clara Novello, then in the full possession of their extraordinary powers, sing in private even more frequently than in public; and I can count upon my fingers the *cantatrici di camera* whom I could conscientiously pronounce to be faultless in the essentials of voice production, musicality and poetical intelligence. Alice Barbi is one of these *raræ aves*—the best of them,

indeed, within my remembrance, although the deliverances of Hèlene Magnus, Amalie Joachim, Marie Conrad, and Ellen de Fonblanque are amongst those which I count as my most precious memories. She hath the gift of tongues, too, and a fascinating presence. It is comfortable to know that such a paragon is not a mere casual visitor to these shores, but has made her home amongst us in London, let us hope for many a year to come. One word of praise for Garibaldi Paggi, who played the 'cello obbligato to Caracciolo's "Organetto" with excellent taste and pure intonation.

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There is a good deal to be said about the experimental concert—professing to be the first of a series—given a few weeks ago at the Prince's Hall by Mr. Louis Melbourne, with the object of introducing American composers and executants to the British musical public. About this entertainment, however, I feel much as a certain optimistic old lady is said to have felt with respect to a peculiarly harrowing Scriptural incident—viz., that it took place a long time ago and "we'll hope it isn't true." There is, no doubt, a vast deal of musical talent, creative and interpretative, knocking about in the United States; the more the pity that it was not more efficiently represented at the "American Concert" of January 23. Mediocrity was the ruling characteristic of the over-long list of performers, fortunately with one or two brilliant exceptions, such as Miss Griswold, whose fine dramatic singing was vehemently applauded, Miss Rider, whose pianism is considerably above the average, Miss Morgan, who played the harp with an intelligence worthy of a better cause, and finally Miss Buck, a charming songstress, and extremely pretty girl to boot. Of the male instrumentalists the less said the better. The second part of the programme was hallowed to "American selections only," a circumstance which may have had something to do with the swift and steadfast departure of the audience in strong detachments after each successive number, until a mere sprinkling of the artists' personal friends remained "to see them through." The attendance was not large at any period of the evening; but the compositions of Van Lennep and Pease dispersed the gathering as promptly as though they had been so many magisterial recitations of the Riot Act.

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The anticipations, generally entertained in metropolitan musical circles, that the twenty-fifth anniversary of M. and Madame Sainton's wedding-day would give rise to some joyful celebration, in which their countless friends and admirers might be permitted to take part, were doomed to disappointment, owing to a serious indisposition from which our talented countrywoman, the *doyenne* of English songstresses, was suffering on the 4th ult. For some time past her health has not been as robust as her well-wishers (whose name is legion, for to know is to love and revere her) could wish; and throughout the day in question, instead of fêting her Silver Wedding gaily with her ever-young husband and amiable family, she was confined to her room, unable to respond in person to any one of the thousand congratulations that reached her from all parts of the United Kingdom. Hers has been such a beautiful life, so shining an example

of work well done, sublime unselfishness, and unflagging devotion to duty, that the interest felt by the public in all concerning her is of quite an exceptional character. In a word, her fellow countrymen and women are justly proud of her, and it is their heartfelt desire that she may be spared to them for many years to come, the chief ornament and honour, in this country at least, of the profession to which she has exclusively belonged for little short of half a century.

P.S.—I had scarcely ended the foregoing sentence, which I neither suppress nor alter, knowing that it expresses the feelings entertained towards Charlotte Dolby by the British public at large, when the inexpressibly sorrowful tidings reached me that my dear old friend—the sweetest, kindest of women, the most faithful votary of the art she served—was no more. She passed away peacefully, in the presence of her husband and son, adoring and adored. Fortunately, up to the very hour of her death she was unaware that she was in any danger, and preserved her cheerfulness unabated, despite much physical suffering. Only a day or two before the end came—so strong was her love for her work—she insisted upon the door of her bedroom being left open while her class was going through its vocal exercises in a lower floor of the house, as she wished to listen to the singing of her pupils. She will be mourned as the best of teachers and friends by many hundreds of students of the musical art, to whom she has rendered inestimable services. Those nearest and dearest to her have suffered an irreparable loss. It is to be hoped that the bitterness of their grief may be in some degree abated by the profound sympathy felt for them by Charlotte Dolby's countless friends and admirers, amongst whom I am proud to claim a place of very old standing, dating from the year 1847.

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I have received a copy of a circular recently issued by Messrs. Boosey & Co., in which that eminent publishing firm not only proves itself to be familiar with the spirit of the ancient *lex talionis*, but to be capable of enforcing that healthy old statute with uncommon vigour and completeness. It will not yet have been forgotten by the readers of The Theatre that two deservedly unsuccessful operas, the music of which owed its being to Dr. Villiers Stanford, were brought out in London last season: the one, entitled "The Canterbury Pilgrims," by Mr. Carl Rosa, at Drury Lane; the other, hight "Savonarola," by Mr. Hermann Franke, at Covent Garden. Their peculiarities were dealt with at the time in the columns of this magazine by the writer of these lines, who considered himself justified in prophesying that works at once so intrinsically ugly and so intolerably dull would speedily be banished *à perpetuité* from a stage upon which nothing short of an amazing lack of taste and sagacity in certain influential quarters would ever have permitted them to intrude their wearisome and unpleasant entities. Subsequent events fully justified the forecast in question. Having been performed twice, to the great distress of many unoffending persons whom duty or curiosity had gathered together within the walls of Old Drury during one or other of its productions, "The Canterbury Pilgrims" was wisely eliminated from Mr. Rosa's repertoire, that

intelligent *impresario* having lost so large a sum by his experiment that he promptly made up his mind not to throw good money after bad. "Savonarola" was brought out in German by the luckless *impresa* whose mistakes and mishaps effectually blighted the prospects of German opera in this country. Had the company been even as good as the one that visited London three or four years ago—which was far from being the case—it could have done nothing with "Savonarola," the intrinsic gruesomeness of which was not to be surmounted by any imaginable combination of executive talent. *Bref*, the two operas were failures—dead, irretrievable, hopeless failures; and public opinion indignantly consigned them to the limbo of exploded windbags. Now Messrs. Boosey & Co. had purchased the copyright of these works from their composer, and had paid a very large price for them—such a price, I fancy, as neither Mozart nor Weber ever received for any two of their immortal operas. That, however, was the great music-publishers' affair; to them Dr. Stanford's compositions meant a speculative investment of capital, and if the transaction proved unremunerative they had no one to blame for their losses but themselves. But their arrangements with Dr. Stanford, somehow or other, were interpreted by the latter in a sense which they regarded as incorrect—a view that received absolute confirmation from the result of litigation which ensued, and the cost of which was sufficiently considerable to take the bloom off Dr. Stanford's bargain, much as he at one time seemed to have had the best of it. Not content, however, with having won their lawsuit, Messrs. Boosey & Co., as it would appear from the circular to which I have already alluded, resolved to further avenge the losses and vexations to which they had been subjected by administering to their adversary such a dose of humiliation as it has seldom been the misfortune of an English composer to be compelled to swallow. They have announced that the copyright of the "Canterbury Pilgrims" and "Savonarola" are to be sold by auction (the sale will have taken place at Messrs. Puttick & Simpson's before these lines appear in print, always supposing that any collector of curiosities should think it worth while to make a bid for such useless articles as operas that no one wants to hear), and do not fail to point out, with succinct ironical simplicity, that although "these works cost the publishers £1,200 apiece, the latter ('Savonarola') is still unpublished." Surely this is "the most unkindest cut of all;" for it does not hesitate to depreciate the value of the property offered for sale in order to inflict a pang of extra shrewdness upon the composer who has given offence to Messrs. Boosey & Co. Only so wealthy a firm could afford to exercise reprisals upon its favourite foe by putting forward such a plain inference that his work is really worthless, for which reason its present possessors ardently desire to be rid of it at any price. This announcement, to say the least of it, is the reverse of encouraging to bidders *in posse;* for who, save at a merely nominal figure, and animated by the same sort of reckless fancy that induces some men to put a sovereign from time to time on a rank outsider, would think of purchasing an opera which an experienced London publisher, having been betrayed into the folly of giving £1,200 for it, does not even deem worth printing.

Before closing the lid of my Musical-Box for this month, I should like to mention that I have recently had the pleasure of listening to two excellent young English baritone singers, both of whom, I feel sure, are destined to win no ordinary measure of public favour. Their names are Deane Brand and Coffin; their voices are of excellent quality, although differing essentially from one another in *timbre;* their intonation is irreproachable, and they both sing in a thoroughly musicianly manner, with cultivated intelligence and unaffected feeling.

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

# Our Play-Box.

## "AS YOU LIKE IT."

Shakespeare's Comedy, revived at the St. James's Theatre, on Saturday, January 24, 1885.

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| Duke ... ... ... ... | Mr. J. F. Young. | Adam ... ... ... ... | Mr. Maclean. |
| Frederick ... ... ... | Mr. Denison. | Dennis ... ... ... ... | Mr. Vivian. |
| Amiens... ... ... ... | Mr. Joseph Tapley. | Touchstone ... ... ... | Mr. Hare. |
| Jaques ... ... ... ... | Mr. Hermann Vezin. | Sir Oliver Martext ... | Mr. Myers. |
| First Lord ... ... ... | Mr. Brandon Thomas. | Corin ... ... ... ... | Mr. R. Cathcart. |
| Second Lord ... ... | Mr. W. T. Lovell. | Sylvius ... ... ... ... | Mr. F. Rodney. |
| Le Beau ... ... ... | Mr. E. Hamilton Bell. | William... ... ... ... | Mr. E. Hendrie. |
| Charles... ... ... ... | Mr. H. Vernon. | Rosalind ... ... ... | Mrs. Kendal. |
| Oliver ... ... ... ... | Mr. Waring. | Celia ... ... ... ... | Miss Linda Dietz. |
| Jaques ... ... ... ... | Mr. F. M. Paget. | Phebe ... ... ... ... | Miss Webster. |
| Orlando... ... ... ... | Mr. Kendal. | Audrey ... ... ... ... | Miss Lea. |

TIME, which changeth the course and aspect of so many things, has, within the last few weeks, effected a somewhat startling transformation upon the opinions and judgment of Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, by leading them to forsake the lucrative paths of modern comedy, in order that the versatile powers of themselves and company may be still further recognized when displayed in one of the most ideal and exquisite creations of thought ever inspiring the immortal genius of England's greatest poet, William Shakespeare.

How far the latest revival of "As You Like It" strengthens the artistic fame and standing of those engaged in its representation is a problem which must necessarily be largely solved according to the nature and temperament of each separate individual. Many whose acquaintance with the Master-Poet is of a somewhat limited order, devoid of imaginative and poetic ideas, will assuredly rejoice at the lavish expenditure and scenic effects bestowed by the managers of the St. James's Theatre upon this idyllic drama. To such minds the bright dresses and gaudy apparel donned by the various lords and pages in the forest of Ardennes are matters of infinitely greater importance and attraction than is the way in which these said nobles enunciate and comprehend the several speeches allotted them. Their essentially modern gait and demeanour becomes in like manner a seemingly trifling cause of complaint, so long as they pose beside gurgling brooks and sheltering trees in harmoniously graceful attitudes, which,

speaking well for the skilful training of the stage manager, lessens rather than increases the natural beauty and simplicity of the scene.

Such, at least, is the inevitable impression created in the minds of those to whom this pastoral comedy is something more than a structure whereon to exhibit the accurate costumes of a certain time and date, or the wondrous perfection which distinguishes in the present day the united crafts of scene-painter and stage-carpenter. To the true lovers and admirers of Shakespeare, however, the play is the *first* thing to be considered; *secondarily*, the manner in which it is caparisoned and bedecked. It may possibly prove a source of some pleasure to learn that the garments encircling the respective forms of Rosalind and Celia are in strict keeping and accordance with those investing their subjects and retainers; but does the fact strengthen to any appreciable extent the interest we experience whilst following in fantasy the fortunes of the love-sick Rosalind and her affectionate companion? Are we, on the other hand, a particle more disposed to wink at the faults and failings of an Orlando, because his mien and bearing are unquestionably set off to the greatest advantage by the adroitness and good taste of the costumier's art? We fear not.

If Rosalind and Orlando be but the real embodiment of Shakespeare's exquisite creations—if their thoughts and imaginations inseparably commingle and entwine with the words to which they give utterance, it is as equally certain that the accessories of their art will become to *us*, as they presumably are to *them*, a matter of altogether minor and secondary importance. Is it thus, we would now question, with respect to the present revival of "As You Like It" at the St. James's Theatre? Are we drawn into clearer and more intimate understanding with the play, or rather left with former impressions and ideas altered neither greatly for better or worse?

Let us first glance at the Rosalind of Mrs. Kendal—inimitable artist when depicting the hopes and aspirations, the woes and sorrows, of every-day existence, but failing somewhat in her powers of merit and excellence when treading the imaginative paths of poetry and idealism. Rosalind, with all her wayward fun and humour enshrouding a woman's heart of truest love and tenderness, is, in Mrs. Kendal's hands, such an excellent example of astute thought and study, that at times we are almost disposed to award it a certain power of natural spontaneity which in reality it scarcely for an instant possesses. Never does this artist wholly succeed in merging her individuality in the character she portrays; scarcely for a moment does her mind so forcibly grasp its varying alternations and meanings that we are enabled to forget the personality of the actress in that of another soul and being. The strong liking created in Rosalind's heart towards Orlando from the first moment when her eyes raise themselves to his appears strangely lifeless and unimpressive as depicted by Mrs. Kendal; yet the incident is one of the greatest importance as regards consequent events in the fair Rosalind's career. The passionate fervour of love has at length taken hold of her heart; all that follows and ensues is but a confirmation and strengthening of the all-engrossing sentiment.

Nevertheless, the meaning of Rosalind's query, "Is yonder the man?"

possesses but little signification in the hands of Mrs. Kendal—a fault much destroying the varied sentiments of the scenes subsequently occurring in the forest glades, where the venturesome maiden, in boyish guise, alternately chaffs and woos her disconsolate lover, whilst tenderly cherishing the sonnets so all unconsciously addressed to herself. Physically unsuited for such a character, Mrs. Kendal nevertheless brings the resources of her art to bear, with some degree of success, upon the humorous side of Rosalind's nature. To say that the character receives full justice at her hands, or is in any way consistent with this artist's essentially modern style and demeanour, would be as great an anachronism as to declare, for example, that Ellen Terry could, by any conceivable means, have rivalled Mrs. Kendal's memorable impersonation of Claire de Beaulieu in the "Ironmaster."

"Every one in his own place." Mrs. Kendal possibly feels and comprehends the character of Rosalind most realistically and intensely. The fact, however, remains the same, that she cannot portray to her *audience* the poetic beauties of thought and sentiment which make up the sum total of Rosalind's nature. Mrs. Kendal's elocution is nevertheless a gift greatly to be enjoyed and admired. Would that its influence were more productive of good on the utterances of some of her company. Mr. Kendal, whilst speaking his lines with all due care and precision, yet fails to invest the character of Orlando with any marked or striking individuality. His attitudes, especially in the duel scene in act i., are singularly awkward and ungainly; neither is the feeble push, by which Orlando causes the immediate overthrow of Charles, at all consistent with the Wrestler's loudly acclaimed dexterity and prowess.

Mr. Hermann Vezin, as Jaques, wins hearty recognition in the few but important speeches which fall to his share in the forest scenes. Truly delightful indeed is it to study this actor's admirable elocution—so clear and forcible in enunciation—a gift employed to a similar good purpose by Mr. Hare, whose Touchstone appears to us as finished an example of character sketching as any this gentleman has previously attempted. Nothing indeed could be better than the uniformly consistent and natural manner in which Mr. Hare merges his own individuality in the nature of the presuming and philosophizing clown. A word of praise must likewise be awarded Miss Webster, whose impersonation of Phebe shows marked improvement and promise as to future excellence; whilst the Celia of Miss Dietz exhibits to no less advantage the sympathetic style of this most pleasing artist.

The songs and incidental music, composed for the present revival by Mr. Alfred Cellier, are sufficiently melodious and attractive. We could, perhaps, wish that they had been set in somewhat quainter form. Nevertheless, their present style accords well with the modern tone essentially pervading the latest representation of Shakespeare's comedy "As You Like It." H. S. D.

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## "THE OPAL RING."

Comedy, in Two Acts, by G. W. Godfrey. Adapted from "Péril dans la Demeure" of Octave Feuillet. First acted at the Court Theatre, on Wednesday afternoon, January 28, 1885.

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| Sir George Carteret ... | Mr. John Clayton. | Lady Carteret ... ... | Miss Marion Terry. |
| Lord Henry Tober ... | Mr. Arthur Cecil. | Mrs. Rivers ... ... ... | Miss Lydia Foote. |
| Harold Rivers ... ... | Mr. H. B. Conway. | Wilson ... ... ... ... | Miss Lucy Roche. |

The French original of Mr. Godfrey's latest play first saw the light at the Comédie Française, on April 19, 1855. Tom Taylor adapted it for the English stage, under the title of "The House or the Home?" and four years later it was brought out at the Adelphi with John Billington and Mr. and Mrs. Wigan in the cast. "Autres temps, autres mœurs." Tom Taylor is voted old-fashioned, and the demand for a newer rendering brings Mr. Godfrey to the fore with appropriate present-day dialogue. Indeed the dialogue is so clever and natural, and the construction of the piece is at times so weak that we are tempted to paraphrase an old saying, and assure Mr. Godfrey that the virtues of the play are all his own, and the failings those of Feuillet's original. The play runs on very old lines. An over-busied husband, who has no time to make love to his young wife, a handsome stripling, who is extremely anxious to undertake the love-making for him, a good genius in the shape of his mother, a neglected wife; these are the *dramatis personæ*, and the mere enumeration of them suffices to tell the tale. In but one instance only does Mr. Godfrey break fresh ground, and that is towards the conclusion, when, contrary to the precedent afforded by the two preceding plays, he leaves Sir George Carteret in happy ignorance of the storm that has been brewing around him. Having made this alteration, it is to be regretted that the present adapter did not carry his work of renovation somewhat farther. The play would be strengthened, and gain greatly in interest if we were permitted to make the heroine's acqaintance before the second act; and the inability of Sir George to recognize the handwriting of one of his own clerks does not say much for his sagacity or penetration.

From an exceptionally strong cast Mr. Arthur Cecil must be selected for especial praise. His pourtrayal of a gouty old gentleman was most life-like, and we regret that the word "perfection" has become too hacknied to convey an adequate idea of the extreme polish of his acting. Voice, manner, gestures, were all in keeping, and in this, the latest addition to his fine portrait gallery of old men, Mr. Cecil surpassed himself. Equally at home in his new rôle was Mr. John Clayton as Sir George Carteret. In his endeavour to act in an unconventional and manly fashion, this actor has occasionally shown himself somewhat too bluff in his dealings with women, but in his latest impersonation this tendency was checked with the happiest results.

The ladies' parts were less satisfactorily filled. Miss Marion Terry acted very prettily as the young wife, but the fatal mistake of not letting her be seen until the second act heavily handicapped her. The part of the clever scheming widow was utterly alien to the gentle sympathetic acting of Miss Lydia Foote, and it is highly creditable to her resources as an artist that it

is but very rarely that this knowledge is forced upon her audience. Mr. Conway played with his usual earnestness. His steadily increasing power of facial expression is most commendable.

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## "THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."

Comedy, in Five Acts, by Richard Brinsley Sheridan. First produced at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on Thursday, May 8, 1777.
Revived at the Prince's Theatre, on Tuesday, February 10, 1885.

| | *Drury Lane.* | *Prince's.* |
|---|---|---|
| Sir Peter Teazle | Mr. King. | Mr. W. Farren. |
| Sir Oliver Surface | Mr. Yates. | Mr. F. Everill. |
| Sir Benjamin Backbite | Mr. Dodd. | Mr. Lin Rayne. |
| Joseph Surface | Mr. Palmer. | Mr. H. Beerbohm-Tree. |
| Charles Surface | Mr. Smith. | Mr. Coghlan. |
| Crabtree | Mr. Parsons. | Mr. A. Wood. |
| Careless | Mr. Farren. | Mr. E. Smedley. |
| Rowley | Mr. Aickin. | Mr. H. Crisp. |
| Moses | Mr. Baddeley. | Mr. E. D. Lyons. |
| Snake | Mr. Packer. | Mr. Courtenay Thorpe. |
| Trip | Mr. Lamash. | Mr. J. Carne. |
| Sir Harry Bumper | Mr. Gawdry. | Mr. Dalzell. |
| Sir Toby | | Mr. Dorrell. |
| Servant to Joseph | | Mr. Weathersby. |
| Lady Teazle | Mrs. Abington. | Mrs. Langtry. |
| Mrs. Candour | Miss Pope. | Mrs. Arthur Stirling. |
| Lady Sneerwell | Miss Sherry. | Miss Kate Pattison. |
| Maria | Miss P. Hopkins. | Miss Eva Sothern. |

During the last few weeks, Mrs. Langtry has assuredly braved a most contrary wind of ill-favoured luck with all commendable courage and graceful good-humour. Actors and actresses must seemingly experience, like other folk, that the gifts of the 'good housewife, Fortune,' are easier lost than retained, even by those upon whom she has been pleased to confer many great and undeniable benefits. Mistakes, however, become soonest rectified and launched into oblivion when proving a stepping-stone to graver thought and more duly considered action, as shown in the case of Mrs. Langtry, who could scarcely, we think, have acted upon wiser impulse and advice than that which prompted her to revive Sheridan's "School for Scandal," one of the most excellent and praiseworthy examples of bygone comedy. The latest representation of this well-known play may, for many reasons, advantageously compare with those formally claiming from time to time our several interests and attention. Mrs. Langtry's Lady Teazle is on the whole a satisfactory and conscientious performance, somewhat lacking the requisite alternations of light and shade, but yielding, nevertheless, marked evidence of artistic and dramatic powers.

That the lady's comedy greatly excels her delineation of pathos and sentiment can scarcely in any way be denied. Whether the latter qualities will strengthen and improve as time glides on, the future, of course, can alone say, it being at the present moment somewhat difficult for us to comprehend why the natural and realistic feelings displayed by Mrs. Langtry during the lighter passages of Sheridan's comedy should apparently altogether desert her in its more serious and important situations. Nevertheless, with many qualifications in her favour, Mrs. Langtry's Lady Teazle affords us fair grounds for believing that the lady will ultimately more fully possess the power of merging her own individuality in the character she portrays—a power which can neither be over-estimated nor too warmly upheld where the art of the actor and actress is concerned.

Amongst the present company at the Prince's Theatre there are some

noteworthy examples of the truth of the above statement. That one of these is exemplified by Mr. W. Farren goes almost, we should think, without saying, so veritably does this gentleman's delineation of Sir Peter Teazle acquire increased power and excellence as time moves on. It would be difficult, indeed, to weary of Mr. Farren's impersonation, rendered supremely natural by ever-varying alternations of thought and meaning. Never for a single instant does the actor's mind wander from his assumed position and surroundings, the mischievous fun and humour irradiating Sir Peter's countenance in the memorable scene of act iv. being as vividly understood and appreciated by his audience as is the subsequent shock occasioned by revealed falsehood and deceit which speedily kills the old courtier's jokes and heedless merriment.

Taken either in parts or as a whole, Mr. Farren's depiction of the above-named character is quite admirable and praiseworthy. Neither should we err by bestowing similar commendation on the Charles Surface of Mr. Coghlan, an excellently varied and thoughtful study, finished to the highest degree. Somewhat hindered by the stolid demeanour and forced fun of those surrounding him, Mr. Coghlan plays the carousing scene of act iii. in a spirit of delightful chaff and raillery most admirably coinciding with the volatile, generous nature of Charles Surface. How strikingly this actor's impersonation would throw into direct contrast the sly, deceitful purposes of Joseph Surface can be but scantily recognized in the present instance, owing to Mr. Beerbohm-Tree's strangely ineffective representation of the last-mentioned character. This is the more to be regretted as the principal meaning and interest of the play are largely dependent on our rightly understanding the crafty, insinuating nature of Joseph Surface. As presented by Mr. Tree, the man is wholly devoid of that plausible subtilty which alone renders the favourable opinions entertained towards him by Sir Peter and Lady Teazle at all intelligible and comprehensive. Never for an instant to surrounding friends and companions should the mask of Joseph's deceit be removed; otherwise, the shocked amazement of his associates when finally awakened to a knowledge of the man's lies and villainies brings the play to an altogether meaningless and ineffective conclusion. Such at least is the inevitable impression created by Mr. Beerbohm-Tree's performance, which proves one of the most unaccountable discrepancies in the present revival. Mr. Everill gives us, on the other hand, a very excellent impersonation of Sir Oliver Surface, entering for the time being fully into the ideas and personality of the character, a quality which we could wish were reflected to a similar degree in the respective performances of Miss Kate Pattison as Lady Sneerwell and of Miss Sothern as Maria. The loquacious talk of Mrs. Candour shows to advantage the well-known powers of Mrs. Arthur Stirling.

The mounting of the play is in all respects admirable, consistently decorative and effective. The dresses, particularly one worn by Mrs. Langtry in act iv., are likewise all that could be desired by even the most fastidious and hardly satisfied tastes. Indeed, neither time nor trouble has apparently been spared to render the latest revival of Sheridan's "School for Scandal" as great and decided a success as any of its numerous and varied predecessors.

H. S. D.

# Our Omnibus-Box.

PRECEDING the regretted departure of Jane Hading from our English shores, we were fortunately permitted to study her widely recognized talents in a part wholly differing from that of Clare de Beaulieu, in "Le Maitre de Forges." Admirably, however, as the afore-named character displayed the unquestionable powers of this gifted lady, we much doubt whether these were not employed to even greater advantage in her more recent impersonation of Frou-Frou. Frou-Frou—the child of Nature, the almost indescribable combination of innocent frivolity and recklessness—has surely never been endowed with greater charm and attractiveness of manner than that presented us in the person of Jane Hading. The coquettish fun and mischief irradiating now and again the drooping eyes of the laughing girl, appear in this artist's hands singularly natural and unexaggerated. Heedlessly trifling with the deeper passions animating human existence, we see Frou-Frou pondering for a moment's space over the love-inspired sentiments of Valrèas with as near an approach to seriousness as is the subsequent attention she bestows on her father's various escapades and caprices.

Life is practically to this spoilt child as a toy, a plaything, to be used or thrown on one side according to the dictates and passing fancies of the moment. Such is essentially the Frou-Frou of Jane Hading in the earlier scenes of the play—a creature full of buoyancy, animation, and all the vivacity which apparently makes up the sum total of similar characters. Needless to say, then, how consistent appears the subsequent resolve of the heedless wife and mother to throw upon her sister's shoulders the domestic cares and responsibilities recklessly undertaken and disregarded by herself. So admirably does Jane Hading maintain, up to the last instant in act ii., the victory of this woman's blinded wilfulness over every serious thought and reflection, that her sudden alteration of tone and manner seems to force itself with redoubled meaning on our minds. Slowly but surely we realize the storm gathering over Frou-Frou's life when listening to the decided accents of her voice, or noting the flash of anger lighting up here and again the glance of the once wandering but now strangely observant eyes. Taking in the mutual confidences between sister and husband, they grow somewhat more at rest in her subsequent conversation with the latter, until Frou-Frou, maddened at the half-concealed amusement her repentant words not unnaturally arouse, tears away the hand reposing in her husband's clasp, and abandons herself to increasing misery and despair. One chance, however, one possibility is yet open to this woman, whereby she may absolutely regain the position so heedlessly cast on one side. Her father's hints and conjectures concerning the probable event of Louise's marriage, instantly sow the seeds of an unalterable determination in Frou-Frou's mind to compel, to her utmost ability, the acceptance of an offer in all respects worthy her sister's tastes and position in life. A crisis

has suddenly arisen before the young wife, admitting neither hesitancy of doubt or action. Outwardly calm, though trembling with suppressed excitement, Frou-Frou discloses to her husband the imperative necessity and certainty of Louise's speedy departure.

The woman's dignity remains unshaken even when expressions of no ordinary sorrow and regret issue in an unguarded moment from the lips of her companion. What are these to *her*, provided her unalterable determination is surely accomplished? And so, bestowing on her husband a passionate command to lose no time in breaking the matter to Louise, Frou-Frou flings herself on the sofa at the moment when the unconscious usurper of her rights enters the door. Here it is where Jane Hading's powers of listening stood her in most excellent stead. Not a word, not a syllable on the part of her sister failed to arouse a corresponding reflection on the face turned fully towards us. Every instant we perceived the features changed and altered by gleams of hope and consequent despair, until they became finally stilled in a merciless resolve of purpose, which lent to the womanly voice a hard, desperately defiant ring, wholly eclipsing the hope of any further mercy or pity.

Whilst on the one hand the memorable scene between the sisters is as yet somewhat beyond the physical powers of Jane Hading, it may as frankly be admitted, on the other, that never have the remaining acts of the play been depicted with greater or more charmingly conceived beauties of thought and imagination. Frou-Frou, silently mourning the rash impetuosity which has taken from her for all eternity the united loves of husband and child, seems, even in her sorrow, to rest once again in the peaceful memories of girlhood's joy and contentment. Let us watch her an instant, as she awaits the dread news of either husband's or lover's death, for here it was that the power of Jane Hading's acting became to us no longer a question of doubt and speculation, but a sure and forcible reality.

Frou-Frou, sad and disconsolate, with perceptions almost deadened by unspeakable woe and misery, suddenly finds her thoughts slipping back to a past recollection, when, as a merry child, amongst a party of friends at the theatre, she unexpectedly, without any reason, began to laugh and clap her hands, exclaiming, "Comme je m'amuse, comme je suis heureuse." The pale face, flushed from momentary excitement, vividly recalls to our minds the Frou-Frou of bygone and happier days. Willingly would we keep her thus with us, if only for a little space; but hush! the sound of approaching footsteps dispels in an instant the woman's dream, as she rushes with terrified haste towards the door. In a second the news is told her—yet another, and we hear her imploring for permission to go to the man who has been dangerously wounded for her sake. But no! a gulf, wholly undreamed of, yet assuredly impassable, stretches itself between Frou-Frou and her lover. His mother is now beside him. There is then no place for her! Staggering slowly from the door of escape, the woman once more turns, and we are brought face to face with features lined and drawn in an agony of mental pain; for Frou-Frou, with eyes staring into vacancy—with thoughts gradually freeing themselves from the first awful shock of surprise—sees at

"And this is my wedding-day!"

DIPLOMACY.

Ethel Calhoun

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE," BY BARRAUD.

length that for her on earth there is no harbour of refuge or repose—not even by the side of the man she loves. "C'est bien—c'est très bien!" is the sole utterance issuing from the half-parted lips so soon to be hushed in the eternal sleep of death, and with these words the curtain falls, and Frou-Frou is hidden from our sight. But in our memories Jane Hading's impersonation of this ill-starred heroine will exist long after the remembrance of other and more fleeting pleasures have passed away. How beautiful are the thoughts she unwittingly arouses could be but imperfectly explained had we volumes of words at our disposal. It only remains for us to await the gradual perfecting of time upon gifts of such rare and excellent promise as those possessed by Jane Hading. H.

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After a girlhood of singular interest and incident passed in California, Miss Calhoun resolved to become an actress. She made her first appearance on the stage in the character of Juliet, at the Grand Opera House, San Francisco, on October 18, 1880. It is no injustice to say that the warm welcome then accorded to the girl of eighteen was given to the popular daughter of a well-known man, rather than to the actress. But the young performer even then showed great promise, and she was forthwith engaged by Mr. Ford, a well-known Baltimore theatrical manager, for a tour through the Southern States of America. Miss Calhoun appeared as Juliet, Pauline in "The Lady of Lyons," Julia in "The Hunchback," Mariana in "The Wife," and at Washington she represented Leah Henderson in Sardou's "Daniel Rochat," after only three days' study of the part. Her tour was a complete triumph, the young actress being received with enthusiasm wherever she appeared. But, as might have been expected, the constant travelling, the hard work, and the incessant excitement incidental to such a tour, proved too much, and she broke down in New York. Miss Calhoun, ordered a complete rest and change of climate, passed over to France, where she had the advantage of meeting many men and women eminent in the dramatic world, and of studying acting in the best theatres of Paris. She was returning through England to her native country, when she chanced to be in London, and, hearing of Mrs. Langtry's appearances at the Imperial Theatre, determined to try her fortune on the same boards, and in the same characters as Mrs. Langtry had done. Accordingly, on October 14, 1882, she acted Hester Grazebrook in "An Unequal Match," and, a week later, she represented Rosalind. Coming unheralded as she did, it was not surprising that her performances attracted comparatively little attention. But there were those who praised her even then, and prophesied a brilliant future for her. Amongst others, Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft saw her at the Imperial Theatre, and, being satisfied of her ability, engaged her for the Haymarket Theatre. It was some time, however, before she had an opportunity of distinguishing herself. She appeared at the Haymarket as Lady Nell in Mr. Pinero's comedy, "Lords and Commons," as Lady Duncan in "A Lesson," and as Lydia Languish. In the revival, on November 8, 1884, of "Diplomacy," Miss Calhoun appeared as Dora, and at once secured universal commendation from press and public for her intelligent

and powerful acting of the character. It will thus be seen that Miss Calhoun, although still young in years, has already done good work on the stage. Indeed, her acting has hitherto been so full of promise that it would be a matter for great surprise if she does not eventually take a high place in the ranks of the stage. It is in the character of the heroine in "Diplomacy" that Miss Calhoun has been photographed for this magazine.

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The subject of our other photograph is Mr. Thomas Thorne, the popular manager and actor of the Vaudeville Theatre. He is the brother of George and Frederick, and Emily and Sarah Thorne, all favourably known to the stage. When sixteen years of age he made his first bow to the public at Warrington. Passing through all the hardships then inseparable from the life of an actor in starting his career in the provinces, he gained experience which afterwards stood him in good stead. His first appearance in London was not propitious. He was engaged to act the Miller in "Giralda" at the Standard Theatre, but, the Prince Consort dying, the house had to be closed. He played a part in the pantomime that year, and was engaged for the Surrey Theatre. On October 4, 1862, he appeared there in a comic drama entitled "Tom's Life." On the death of the well-known comedian, Rogers of the Strand, he was engaged to take his place. He remained at the Strand for six years, playing in the principal farces, burlesques, and dramas produced there. In 1870, in conjunction with the late H. J. Montague and Mr. David James, he entered upon the management of the Vaudeville Theatre, and produced there on the opening night Andrew Halliday's comedy "For Love or Money," and a burlesque entitled "Don Carlos; or, The Infante in Arms." On June 4 of this year, in the first performance of Mr. James Albery's comedy "Two Roses," he acted Caleb Deecie, Mr. Irving being the Digby Grant. On September 9, 1871, in the first performance of Mr. Albery's "Apple Blossoms," he appeared as the Great Baggs. During the years 1872–73 "The School for Scandal" and "The Road to Ruin" were revived, the former comedy, in which Mr. Thorne acted Crabtree, having a run of four hundred and twelve nights. On April 1, 1874, in the first performance of Mr. Albery's comedy "Pride," he acted Barnabas Smith. Mr. Thorne next sustained the part of Talbot Champneys in the late Henry J. Byron's comedy "Our Boys," which had an uninterrupted run at the Vaudeville from January 16, 1875, to April 18, 1879. On April 19 of this year he played Tony Judson in Mr. Byron's "The Girls;" and on September 24 he resumed the part of Caleb Deecie in a revival of "Two Roses." Since that date Mr. Thorne has appeared in the following characters at the Vaudeville:—Mr. Henry Dove, in a revival of Buckstone's comedy, "Married Life," on April 10, 1880; Pawle, in "Jacks and Gills," in May 29, 1880; Freddy, in "The Guv'nor," on June 28, 1880; Samuel Buckham, in Mr. Robert Reece's adaptation, "Divorce," on January 29, 1881; Tom Pinch, in the play of that name by Messrs. Joseph Dilley and Lewis Clifton, on March 10, 1881; Graves, in "Money," on May 27, 1882; Bob Acres, in "The Rivals," on December 29, 1882; and Jacob Fletcher,

"When was the last time we had a bottle of port?"

SAINTS AND SINNERS.

Thomas Thorne

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE," BY BARRAUD,
263 OXFORD STREET, W.

in Mr. H. A. Jones's drama, "Saints and Sinners," on September 25, 1884.

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To bestow commendation upon "first efforts," displaying either literary, musical, or dramatic abilities, is a proportionate cause of gratification to the criticizer as to the criticized. That much praise may be honestly rendered the musical talents of Miss Marie-Antoinette Kingston can scarcely be disproved, when listening to her charmingly melodious composition, entitled "The Alexandrine Gavotte," published by the well-known firm of Messrs. Chappell & Co. Amongst the every-day mass of strangely indifferent productions, revealing little, if any, originality of thought and treatment, it becomes a positive relief to find a work like the one in question, when simplicity is something more than a synonym for hacknied and imaginative commonplace. Miss Kingston has most happily depicted the graceful, rhythmical movement forming the principal charm and characteristic of a gavotte, whilst varying its chief melody with a prettily worked-out theme, which dispels the monotony of reiteration. Under such favourable auspices, we would heartily commend this "Morceau de Salon" as worthy the appreciation it honestly deserves, whilst trusting that Miss Kingston's first appearance as a composer may in no way be her last, but rather an earnest of greater and more widely recognized fame.

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In reviewing the pages of a quaintly bound volume, entitled "Love Letters," recently published by Messrs. Field & Tuer, we become forcibly aware that the limits of pen and ink are somewhat bounded, when attempting to place before other minds than our own the poetic fancies contained in these delightful records of passionate sentiment and romance. Their author's name is shrouded in mystery; but the *nom de plume*, "A Violinist," gives clearer understanding to his frequent allusions of the sweet-toned instrument, aptly described by its owner as "The tender sprite, who soothes as best he may my fever'd pulse, and makes a roundelay of all my fears." The prelude to these love-songs, likewise composing the first "letter," is especially beautiful from the rare purity of thought in which the poet admirably couches his aspirations and desires. The commencing lines, "Teach me to love thee, as a man in prayer may love the picture of a sainted nun," yield us a truly exquisite idea of the nobler feelings aroused in man's nature by woman's sanctifying influence and enduring love.

It is, however, to be regretted that in the following poems the author has not depicted with greater varieties of light and shade the more worldly and material side of his affection. The two remaining stanzas in "Yearnings" are especially admirable as regards their clearness and directness of meaning—a quality which might, with no small advantage, have been employed to a greater and more appreciable extent in the after-letters *preceding* that entitled "A Vision." For here, on the contrary, there is little if any fault to be found with the charmingly conceived dream of love and music, so dramatically put before the reader's mind that we are inclined to single out this poem as worthy a first place in the entire collection. Nevertheless, we would beg a proportionate interest to be bestowed on the exquisite lines, relating to night and morning, conveyed in the last of these

"Love Letters," appropriately entitled "Victory." Seldom have we read a description of scenery so replete with colour and variety.

The poet's quick transition from "The shuddering that the twilight sends" to the subsequent joy and happiness arising in the birth of another day, is worthy our heartiest commendation. No better or more beautiful instance could, we think, have been here employed to draw our hearts in unison with the spirit of blissful contentment which peacefully brings this poetic series of "Love Letters" to a right and happy end.

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Madame Trebelli is not only one of the greatest artists of her day, but this talented lady always shows excellent taste in the selection of her songs; every new addition to her répertoire must therefore be welcomed by all lovers of music. On the occasion of the eighth Ballad Concert, given at St. James's Hall, on February 4, Madame Trebelli produced a new song, "L'Indovina," by Fanny Puzzi, and sang it in her own masterly style, full of charm and power. This new song is very original and taking, and has the rare quality of not being in the least commonplace; the melody is quaint and charming, the accompaniment is spirited and has a pleasant rhythm. It is not beyond the capacity of amateurs, and is sure to become popular. Madame Trebelli was enthusiastically applauded, gaining a double recall for herself and an encore for the song; she was accompanied by the composer.

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The second of the series of recitals given by Mr. John L. Child at St. George's Hall took place on January 29. The reciter began under rather trying circumstances: part of the audience moved, coughed, and talked so much that Mr. Child had to wait some minutes before obtaining silence, and no sooner had he begun "Enoch Arden" than the side-curtains in the hall were pulled up with a grating noise. Surely this might have been done beforehand; and it would be the merest courtesy on the part of some of the audience, not only to the performer, but also to their neighbours who wish to hear, to keep quiet as soon as he appears on the stage. Three of the recitations were given by Mr. John L. Child for the first time. "The Building of S. Sophia," by Rev. S. Baring Gould, was admirably recited, but the poem is wanting in human interest, and I think is not likely to become popular. The second, scene 3, act i., from "The Merchant of Venice," delivered with simplicity and excellent elocution, is a good addition to Mr. Child's extensive répertoire. The third was the "Story of a Stowaway," by Clement Scott; in this, Mr. Child showed a great depth of feeling; indeed, at one time he was almost carried away by the pathos of the story and seemed on the verge of breaking down, but he recovered himself at once. "Lorraine Lorree," by Rev. Chas. Kingsley, was touchingly said. "The Four Idiot Brothers" was as impressive as ever. An unrehearsed effect happened at the end of this piece: as Mr. Child was repeating the last lines to musical accompaniment, and was saying "at midnight," the clock of the neighbouring church began striking, and curiously enough in the proper key. Mr. Child has an especial gift for rendering the works of Charles Dickens in the true spirit of the author;

he should make a point of always including some piece from the most genial of novelists in his programme. "Mrs. Joseph Porter" was a "chef d'œuvre" of its kind. The evening concluded by "How Mr. Smiggles went to a Public Dinner," by R. F. Turner; and Mr. Child was as successful as ever in this most amusing piece. The vocalist was Miss Annie Butterworth. Mr. Child was recalled several times, receiving hearty and deserved applause.

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The neat little theatre in the Royal Borough of Windsor was chosen on the afternoon of Wednesday, January 28, as the house in which "The Vicar," a comedy-drama by Joseph Hatton and James Albery, should be first performed, for, though Mr. Hatton read extracts from the play some four years ago with considerable success, it had never been represented in its entirety. The adapters may in this case justly say that it is "*founded*" on Mr. Hatton's "Queen of Bohemia," for in the adaptation only the main incident of the novel is used to produce the great situation of the play; one of the chief characters in the book, Maggie's father, does not appear; and the original stern character of the Vicar is transformed into the kindest-hearted and most genially simple-minded of clergymen. The plot turns on the heroine, Maggie Douglas, being almost entrapped, partly through pity for him, but more through the machinations of Mrs. Toynbee (the Queen of Bohemia), into an engagement with the Vicar's son, Tom Desborough, a young rake. She holds honourably to her promise, even after the scapegrace has been driven from his father's house for his malpractices, until she is an unseen witness of her lover's taking part in a burglary at the vicarage. Her real love has been given to Lord Rokeby, a man some years older than herself, whom she eventually marries, but who had been marked by Mrs. Toynbee for herself. A canny Scotchman (a very lady's man among detectives) and a music-hall singer help to make up the characters of a play which, without being particularly strong, is interesting, and would be likely to hold its own if always as well acted as it was by Mr. William Duck's "Called Back" company. Miss Dorothy Dene, with the exception of being a little too sedate in the first act, was all that could be desired. Miss Kate Thoburn was a very fascinating, if scheming, widow, and must be forgiven her double-dealing on the plea that "all is fair in love and war." Mr. Frederick Merer as the Vicar, Mr. Basset Roe as his "ne'er-do-weel" son, Mr. Frederick Terry as Lord Rokeby, and Mr. Thomas Sidney as David Macfarlane were excellent in their several rôles, and Mr. C. Talbot, Mr. E. J. McNamara, and Miss K. Reeves Smith made much of the small parts allotted to them.

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Our Melbourne correspondent writes:—

"My budget this month comprises the doings, in a theatrical way, for November and December. 'Fun on the Bristol' was not an entire success on its removal to St. George's Hall; and on Nov. 9, Mr. Sheridan produced an original drama, 'Cuckoo,' written by himself and Mr. J. A. Meade. It was a failure, and the company left for Hobart on Nov. 25. They played a few nights to good business, and then sailed for

New Zealand. They are appearing in Dunedin now. Miss Marie de Grey revived 'Moths,' at the Bijou Theatre, on Nov. 1; 'Woman against Woman' was played on Nov. 8; 'The Country Girl' on the 17th; 'London Assurance' on the 22nd; 'Adrienne Lecouvreur' on the 26th; 'As You Like It' on the 29th; 'Lady Clare' on Dec. 6; 'She Stoops to Conquer' on Dec. 15; 'The Busybody,' Dec. 20; and Miss de Grey benefited on Dec. 25. On Boxing Night she opened a short season at the Princess Theatre, with 'East Lynne.' I need hardly say it did not succeed. She is ringing the changes now on the list I have given above. 'Daisy Farm' was taken off the boards of the Theatre Royal, and replaced by Gillette's American comedy, 'The Professor,' on Nov. 22, with Miss Maggie Moore as Daisy Brown. 'Diplomacy' was produced on Dec. 13, with Mr. Wybert Reeve as Henry Beauclerc. On Nov. 18, 'The Merry Duchess' was withdrawn at the Princess Theatre, in favour of Luscombe Searelle's opera 'Estrella,' which ran till Boxing Night, and had vitality enough to run many weeks more. Its success was marked. Mr. Searelle's new opera, 'Bobadil,' is running at the Opera House, Sydney, and bids fair to excel 'Estrella' in popularity. Mr. Phil Day has been highly and deservedly praised for his acting as the Doge of Venice in the latter opera. 'In the Ranks' was played for the last time at the Opera House on Dec. 20. On Christmas Eve the pantomime, 'Sinbad, the Sailor,' was produced, and is now running. The Theatre Royal pantomime, 'Cinderella,' is the most elaborate and successful one we have had for years, and much credit is due to all concerned in its production. Professor Anderson is giving magical séances at St. George's Hall; and a diorama of the Zulu War is at the Victoria Hall. A sweet sensation drama is running at the Temperance Hall, entitled 'Shout! or, the Demon Nobbler.' The pantomime at the Sydney Theatre Royal is 'Red Riding Hood,' produced on Boxing Night. Miss Geneviève Ward is doing good business in Wellington, New Zealand. 'Rip Van Winkle,' with Mr. T. B. Appleby as the bibulous Dutchman, is the bill of fare at the Theatre Royal, Adelaide. A pantomime, 'The Babes in the Wood,' is running at the Academy of Music, in the same city. Mr. George Leitch is playing a Christmas season in Hobart. Mr. James MacMahon, who brought out the Lyceum scenery for 'Romeo and Juliet,' has entered an action for breach of contract against Messrs. Rignold and Allison. Damages are laid at £1,000. Miss Fanny Reed is said to be in Tasmania; as is Herr Remenyi, the successful Hungarian violinist."

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Some very pertinent remarks on the stage question by a woman will be read with considerable interest by all who have followed recent discussions :—

"The arguments raised by Mr. Burnand in the January number of the *Fortnightly Review*, concerning the social disadvantages accruing to those who adopt the stage as a profession in life, has invested an old subject of grievance with renewed strength and vitality, whilst holding out but vague and somewhat sceptical hopes of a possible amendment and bettering of affairs in the days which are to come.

"More especially do we regret that such should be the case, when taking into consideration the vast number of people who—rejoiced at raking up an ancient bone of contention—will discuss and corroborate Mr. Burnand's assertions as truths of time-honoured and lasting offence, rather than as evils, capable of being decreased and lessened even by the charitable thoughts and judgments of their several detractors. Before touching, however, upon the question of reform, whereby the moral and social condition of the rising theatrical generation might be immeasurably altered for the better, we must follow, to a certain extent, the footsteps of Mr. Burnand in glancing at the life which confronts those who go upon the stage rather from choice of will and inclination than from any imperative cause or necessity. Let us look, for example, at some of the varied conditions imperceptibly altering the aspect of a young girl's existence from the moment when her decision becomes absolute to court the favour and smiles of Fortune through the medium of a profession undeniably offering greater opportunities for the display of personal and individual attractions than can be encountered in any other grade or calling in life. We will suppose that—belonging to the middle class of society—she has been fairly well educated, is accustomed to the ordinary luxuries and refinements of home life, and can neither be described as essentially 'fast,' nor 'strictly proper.' Her ideas, though highly independent and liberal in tone, are nevertheless governed by certain principles of right and wrong, which must necessarily be either strengthened or enfeebled by the influence and example of those surrounding her. Such is the position of our created heroine when, with feelings of self-gratified pride and vanity, she is permitted by parents or guardians to follow the bent of her girlish aspirations and go upon the stage. We will imagine her fortunate enough to gain a footing in a theatre of first-class reputation, where her artistic advancement and well-being are presumably a matter of some interest to those whose talents and high professional standing have lifted them above the strife and uncharitableness of feeling affecting others less favoured by the decrees of Fortune than they are themselves. What about the reverse side of the picture, however, which presently confronts our heroine when thrown into the society of ladies and gentlemen accustomed as herself to the refinements and courtesy of life, though often, it must be confessed, showing a somewhat strange reflection of the same in their actions, thoughts, and manners? What of the gradual surprise created in her mind when, in lieu of kindly counsel and encouragement from those about her, she has rather to learn the implicit obedience paid the seemingly all-sufficing motto, 'Every one for himself.' Thought and attention are bestowed upon her talents and faculties only inasmuch as they help towards the better representation and *ensemble* of the play. Her vanity and dreams of self-aggrandisement are possibly great, but evidently no higher or boundless in their limits than are those possessed by her manager or manageress, whose influence therefore, even on this one score, can scarcely be of great or lasting good in moderating the pride and self-assurance of the girl's forming ideas and character.

Is it any wonder, then, that their example should gradually stamp a like

resemblance on the mind and nature of the young actress? Is it surprising that, unshielded by the friendly surveillance of those in higher position than herself, the intimate familiarities of conduct and manner on and off the stage should in time deteriorate, and possibly destroy, not only the woman's modesty, but her purity of mind and nobility of thought? Keeping herself aloof from the general throng would scarcely better her position, whilst arousing accusations of pride and affectation probably worse to bear than the smaller evils she is obliged to encounter and put up with.

"But, our readers will exclaim, you surely do not mean to imply that a manageress's time should be employed in studying the several positions or prying into the sentiments animating the various minds of her company? If such were the case, would she not, in all probability, get sorry thanks and recompense for her pains, whilst neglecting the cares and duties of management, which generally devolve in greater or lesser degree upon her own shoulders?

"Referring to the above question, we would answer that the responsibilities of management can never be honestly undertaken or rightly fulfilled unless those in authority keep ever before their minds that they are as morally bound to weaken, by the influence of noble example, the strong temptations surrounding youthful aspirants to dramatic honours, as they are practically obliged to study the tastes and pleasures of the public by whom their theatre is supported. Exemplary demeanour and conduct would free them from the imputation of meddling in other people's affairs, whilst silently lessening those evils which may threaten, but not overcome, the rising theatrical generation. Leaving these without help or guidance in the time of their novitiate is but to increase a hundred-fold the attraction and power of the offences which give society cause to sneer at the social standing of a profession eminently free from taint and impurity, when taking into consideration, as we are bounden to do, the many temptations by which it is inevitably encompassed. Words of malice and all uncharitableness, prejudices instilled by narrow-minded thoughts and sentiments, will assuredly remain unappeased to the end of time if strengthened by similar utterances from one whose high position and influence on the stage might prove of incalculable benefit to its members if rightly and discriminately employed. Were such the case, ties of friendship and goodwill would be increased rather than lessened between a play-loving public and an art whose followers, taking them all in all, are as much united in honourable loyalty and true-heartedness of purpose as are those gathered in the ranks of other professions. But until the charity which thinketh no evil is exercised on and off the stage in greater and more proportionate measures, there is much reason to fear that the social positions of actor and actress will remain a question of dissension and dispute amongst varied grades and sections of society—a fact derogatory to an art which, to quote Mr. Burnand's words, should be as independent and as exalted as virtue, and content with virtue's reward."

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Mr. Frank Lindo, whose name is known in connection with some of the best amateur clubs, gave his first recital at Steinway Hall, on January 20.

Mr. Lindo possesses the one great gift for a reciter—a powerful, rich voice, then a reliable memory, and last, but not least, his heart and soul are in his work. The evening began with Clement Scott's poem, "The Women of Mumbles Head." Mr. Frank Lindo was rather nervous at first, but this feeling passed off as he proceeded, and the verses were earnestly recited. "A Night with a Stork," and the last item, "Our Eye-Witness on the Ice," were amusing and simply said, but purely comic pieces do not show Mr. Frank Lindo at his best. "The Convict's Escape," by Re. Henry, was given in a most touching and pathetic manner; and "Jud Browning's Account of Rubinstein's Piano Playing," before alluded to, only needed a little more crescendo towards the end; but Moses Adams's piece is exceedingly difficult of delivery, and the young reciter is to be congratulated on his rendering. Mr. Frank Lindo has a bright future before him, I think. Let me warn Mr. Lindo against one small fault: now and then, when desiring to emphasise a word, he is apt, unconsciously I believe, to pitch his voice in a different key; this now trifling defect, if not looked after, might degenerate into mannerism. Mr. Lindo's voice is full and mellow, and when the words are spoken with the true feeling he shows throughout, needs no artificial raising to "tell" at the proper time.

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"The White Pilgrim," by Messrs. Herman Merivale and Gilbert à Becket, was given at the Olympic Theatre on February 9. It was originally produced at the Court Theatre in February, 1874, when the part of the deformed Sigurd was admirably sustained by Mr. Hermann Vezin. The plot, which is almost identical with that of "Sintram," is too well known to need repetition. The Olympic performance can scarcely be deemed a success. The "White Pilgrim" is a poetical play, with occasional passages of great merit, but it is utterly unfitted for stage representation, and the treatment it received at the hands of its exponents was not sufficiently artistic to render its defects less obvious. Mr. Nutcombe Gould, who played the part of Harold, is possessed of a good stage presence and a musical voice, but his evident surprise at finding himself on the stage as the hero of the piece rapidly communicated itself to his audience. Mrs. Beerbohm-Tree, as the heroine Thordisa, was not unnaturally rendered somewhat nervous by continual disturbances in the house, but her interpretation of a very monotonous rôle was intelligent and pleasing. The Sigurd of Mr. R. Pateman was a very effective performance; but of the rest of the cast (with the single exception of Miss Tilbury, who spoke her lines with great clearness) it were better to be silent.

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The following letter is from a reader of The Theatre in Jarhaut, Assam:—

"Since I arrived here in the land of peace and quiet (as regards amusements of any kind) I have had only one great pleasure, and that is in reading your most excellent magazine The Theatre every month. It brings back to me the memories of the many pleasant evenings I used to spend at the theatres and concerts, both in London and the provinces. I

am longing to have a look in at the theatres again so as to be as far away as possible from the black faces which I see around me day after day, and to be able to speak English always, and not their language, which nearly breaks one's jaws when pronouncing such words as *notun noxa Theatre kitaban*, which means, 'bring me the new Theatre book.' I have read with much interest the article on 'Hamlet,' by Rossi, in the April and November numbers, and also on hissing or applauding a play on its first production. I have lent the numbers as I have received them to some of my friends, and they all come to the same conclusion that your magazine is an excellent work in all respects. I am now anxiously awaiting the December number. It takes fully a month to reach me from England. I cannot conclude this without wishing your magazine every success for the future."

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The versatile ideas employed by Mr. Brandon Thomas in his varied compositions of verse and song are fully recognizable in a numerous selection of the same recently published by Messrs. Bath, of 23, Berners Street. Especially charming is the plaintive melody of an Ethiopian ditty, entitled "Sing along, Sambo," which appears to be somewhat reflected in a sentimental refrain, strangely but humorously linked with the comical incidents related in "Tabby's Catastrophe; or, Love and Pride." "Tell her, ye Stars," by the same composer, is an unpretentious setting to words of scarcely average merit and importance; indeed, contrasting this with the afore-mentioned songs, we should be inclined to say that the musical talents of Mr. Brandon Thomas are more advantageously employed when giving voice to the quaint fun inspiring his Ethiopian melodies than to those dealing with more exalted though scarcely such amusing veins of thought.

Messrs. Stanley, Lucas & Co. likewise send us a humorous composition by Emily J. Troup, worthy some praise, inasmuch as it tells the tale of "Daddy Longlegs and the Fly," in an essentially taking and melodious fashion, worth the hearty commendation of all appreciating comic songs. The same firm also publish a tarantella by Walter Macfarren, for the pianoforte, and a set of waltzes by Florence May. It is impossible, however, to award any marked distinction to either of the above-named works, the melody pervading Macfarren's tarantella being so weak that we quickly tire of a continued reiteration of the same, when yielding neither hope nor possibility for any striking and artistic effect. Some of the movements in waltz time by Florence May are commendable for their thoughtful and carefully worked-out harmonies, but, taken as a whole, the piece proves somewhat dull and uninteresting.

Indeed, after looking over many publications unworthy the most qualified praise and approbation, it proves an unexpected pleasure to note Gounod's admirable setting of Tennyson's well-known lines, "Ring out, wild bells," so wonderfully does the musician's art sympathetically commingle with one of the many exquisite thoughts to be gleaned from amidst the pages of "In Memoriam." The result must therefore give ample cause for satisfaction to both parties concerned; the song being, moreover, well worthy the

painstaking conscientious study so often frittered and thrown away upon the majority of modern melodies and so-called "ballads."

In deference to our readers' patience, we pass over several works possessing little if any claim to attention, whilst commending the spirited set of quadrilles, compiled by W. C. Levey from various melodies occurring in the popular burlesque of "The Babes," Miss Atherton's excellently rendered song, from the same comedy, entitled "Little Sallie Waters," and "Les Comédien's Waltz," by C. J. Taylor, as sufficiently melodious and well-timed compositions, qualities likewise displayed in the Dance Caprice by T. Charles, and a valse de concert, by C. Grey, respectively entitled "L'amour" and "Adelaide." The last-mentioned songs and compositions are published by the firm of Messrs. Willcocks & Co.

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Bedford Park is an æsthetic colony, which is quite a little world in itself. When they give an entertainment here they do so with their own resources, without aid from outsiders. As an instance, on the 14th of February I was invited to The Club, Bedford Park, to witness a children's play, written, mounted, and acted by local talent. After a long journey, and sundry inquiries—for The Club was rather a vague address—I arrived, expecting much as to the mounting of the piece—for was not this the land of artists? but I was a little more doubtful as to the dramatic side of the affair. All doubts were soon dispelled, and I am indebted to these charming little amateurs for an evening of genuine amusement. I arrived a little too early, so did most of the audience, which was numerous. However, as every one seemed to know each other, time passed by swiftly enough, 'midst the cross-fire of conversation. There were a good many juvenile spectators, all on tip-toe of expectation. Behind the green baize one could hear the pattering of little feet, and the chattering of little voices, with now and then a silvery peal of laughter. With the beginning of the overture, a very original drop-scene was disclosed, giving one a country view over a high brick wall, the churchyard in the distance probably put in as a contrast to the gay scene about to be revealed. "Influenza," a musical extravaganza in three acts, has the rare quality of playing (including entr'actes) in less than an hour and a half, and, under the stage-management and training of Mr. and Mrs. Field Fisher, and the author, Mr. Ernest Godfree, went off most briskly and without a hitch. Moreover, the little performers were letter perfect, a worthy example to some of the grown-up amateur clubs. The music, arranged and conducted by Mrs. Aldersey, was appropriately selected; the choruses were especially well sung. Some of Arthur Sullivan's music, with its difficult modulations, was astonishingly well rendered, considering the age of the vocalists. When the curtain rose and displayed the stage of this pretty little theatre, the first act showed us the interior of the Palace of Influenza, King of the Thunder Cloud Islands. Splendid Japanese and Oriental hangings blended harmoniously with the handsome and artistic costumes designed by Mrs. Hurst Daniell and Miss Nash. Influenza, the wicked king, doomed by a fairy to be unusually tall, was enacted by the author himself; the lovers, Snow-white and Prince Brighteyes, by Miss Constance Daniell and Miss Maggie Fisher. The

Oriental dance by Miss Trixy Graham, Miss Susie May, and Miss Katy Macdonald, was gracefully executed. A song, in which Colza (Miss Katy Macdonald) relates her unrequited love for Influenza, showed this little lady to have a very keen sense of humour; she was very good throughout the play. The second act, a forest glade, with mountain scenery in the distance, was, like the drop-scene and the sea view of the last act, due to resident artists, and very effective. This introduced us to Humpty-Dumpty, the King of the Dwarfs, and all his tiny subjects, who give hospitality to poor Snow-white, who has been sent to starve in the forest for refusing to marry Influenza. To all the dwarfs unqualified praise must be given; they acted with a spirit and fun that might serve as pattern to their elders. Humpty-Dumpty (Master Alfred Fisher) five or six years old, I should say, was very funny, and a mere baby (also a Fisher) gained an encore in his one speech, so prettily was it said. But the best bit of quaint acting came from Master John Macdonald as Dip. This tiny boy has a natural gift for acting that no training could give. Miss Agatha Kelly (Ozokerit) also showed an ability for speaking verse that had nothing of the child about it: her lines were delivered with charming simplicity, and one could have wished the little lady had a longer part. Singing comic songs is evidently Mr. Ernest Godfree's forte, his song about the little pigs was intensely amusing, yet absolutely free from vulgarity, the squeaking chorus behind the scenes creating roars of laughter. In the last act, on board the Bedford Barque, Snow-white, whom Influenza has carried off in the last scene of the previous act, is rescued by Brighteyes at the head of the dwarfs. Influenza apologizes, the lovers forgive him, and the tender Colza consoles him. We must not forget Jack Tarre, a new character, very good in the hands of Master Frank Nash. The rest of the cast comprised Miss Gertrude Blogg, Master Osborn, Master Claud, Master Bernard Kelly, Miss Birdie Nash. "Influenza" is an unpretentious extravaganza, eminently suited to its young performers, and full of genuine fun. The author succeeded in not appearing out of place among his youthful company, and deserved the hearty recall given by his friends. Bedford Park may be proud of its children. In wisely not attempting too much the result proved a perfect success.

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To lay down rules about those erratic, though estimable, young people, amateur actors, would seem to be impossible; for, with them, the unexpected generally happens. Thus, the Ivanhoe Dramatic and Musical Club, who, for their performance at Peckham Public Hall, on February 2, chose one very ambitious and one very modest piece, scored a success with the former, and a failure with the latter. The principal piece was "The Old Curiosity Shop," and in it the club made a very respectable show. Extremely clever was the Quilp of Mr. Edward E. King, who played with notable force and incisiveness. He had a thorough grasp of the grim humour of the part, and gave expression to it with intelligence and well-studied effect. Miss Jennie Rubie was well made up as the Marchioness, and played with considerable comic power; and Mr. Bantick, though he had not sufficient dash and swagger, was a satisfactory Dick

Swiveller. Little Nell was played very pleasingly by a young lady, Miss Hudson, whose charming appearance and simple manner made her a great favourite with the audience. Nell's Grandfather was acted with care and considerable ability by Mr. T. G. Jaggs, who was certainly very much better in this part than in that in which he appeared at the club's previous performance. The other parts call for no special notice. The drama was preceded by "A Rough Diamond," which was either ill-rehearsed or spoiled by the nervousness of the performers. Awful, inconceivable breakdowns occurred every now and again, and the prompter had to be so energetic in his attempts to give the word, that half of the audience could have gone on with the part before the panic-stricken performer was got under weigh. Then the actors were all at sea as to their positions on the stage, and, altogether, the piece threatened to collapse utterly more than once. Margery was played by Miss Cecile Leonie, who, though not at all suited for the part, knew her lines, and acted with spirit. Miss Annie Brunette was ladylike and pleasing as Lady Plato, and Mr. Loraine Cox acted with abundant energy as Cousin Joe. Both pieces were excellently staged. The orchestra of the club played an enjoyable selection of music with good effect, and also played the incidental music well.

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I had an opportunity the other day of attending a performance by Miss Nettie Carpenter, a young lady only fourteen years' old, who has recently gained a gold medal at the Paris Conservatoire. Miss Carpenter, I understand, began to play the violin (in miniature) when she was four years old; when she was six, she was so promising a performer that Mdme. Marie Roze, after hearing her, strongly advised that she should be allowed to study the instrument professionally; then came, after a time, a course of study at the Conservatoire; and now Miss Carpenter, who, by the way, is of American parentage, is an executant of exceptional ability and skill. When I heard her, she played a fantaisie by Dunkler, and a cavatina by Raff, and her bowing and "stopping" were of a thoroughly artistic character. More than that, she exhibited the possession of much sympathetic feeling. She has recently been on tour in Britain with the Rose Hersee concert party, and she has appeared with success at Monte Carlo. She would seem destined for a brilliant career.

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I have received some superb photographs of Miss Mary Anderson in the character of Juliet executed by Messrs. Downey, of Ebury Street. I commend them to collectors who illustrate Shakespeare and the play-books of our time. The portrait of Miss Anderson kneeling at the feet of Mrs. Stirling as the Nurse, is a very beautiful picture and a wonderful specimen of photographic art.

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I congratulate Mr. Gilbert Farquhar on the genuine success he has made as Sir Henry Auckland in the comedy of "Impulse," now being played by the Garthorne company in the provinces. Mr. Farquhar has worked on steadily in the country, and we shall soon see him permanently established in London in a first-class comedy company.

Much has been said of the cruel wantonness of calling a dramatic author before the curtain to hoot and jeer at him when a bad play might be condemned by silence. But is it not quite as unkind when an audience, composed of friends, recall an author three times, and applaud him madly, being conscious all the time that the play is not a good one, and thus misleading him against their convictions? I regret that it should fall to me to tell Mr. J. T. Day the unpleasant truth, but by doing so I think I shall prove his best friend. "Fair Fame," a so-called new and original drama in four acts, produced at the Kilburn Town Hall on February 5, is a rambling story, made up of impossible incidents. One cannot for an instant feel any interest in any of the characters, for they are unreal throughout. The dialogue is commonplace, and the "humour" is simple vulgarity. The revolver-shooting by a woman is evidently dragged in as an "actualité," but is not cleverly managed. Miss Alexes Leighton did all she could for the unpleasant character she had undertaken. Mr. E. Gordon Taylor managed to be earnest and natural; and Mr. Frank Lindo also rendered good service as the villain of the play, but his "make up" was bad. Of the rest of the cast the least said the better.

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Of Mr. Irving's farewell visit to Washington our correspondent in America writes:—"Little need be said except that it is the event of the social season. It is welcomed by politicians as the most agreeable relief from the monotony of the closing days of a session overshadowed by the coming of a new Administration. There was a melancholy scene at the Capitol, where a number of legislators, duly arrayed for an evening at the theatre, were summoned to attend a committee meeting, and walked about in high dudgeon as it became evident that the public service would not yield to 'The Merchant of Venice.' President Arthur was present at the second performance, but last night there were visitors even more interesting to the European eye. These were the Comanche Indians I saw at the Smithsonian Institute. They sat through 'Charles I.,' and never took their eyes from the stage. Perhaps the savage breast was soothed, or perhaps the Comanches were lost in a dream of the scalps that might, under more favourable conditions, be collected in the theatre. Yet it may be that, some generations hence, Charles I., Mr. Irving, and Miss Terry may figure in the lore of the Comanches as great 'sachems.'"

# THE THEATRE.

## Three Desperate Deaths in Shakespeare.

By H. Schütz Wilson.

> But you, gods, will give us
> Some faults that make us men.

THE era of Elizabeth was, in England, one of those epochs in which a nation rises to its loftiest altitude of heroic action, and therefore of heroic poetry; and the form which poetry then selected as its fittest mode of expression was the drama, which is, in essence, poetry shown in action. The Reformation, maritime discovery, an Elizabeth on the throne, the hatred of Spain and Rome evinced by the shadow of the coming Armada—all these powerful causes wrought a noble national life to its highest tension, and produced a time which produced a Shakespeare. It was an objective age; and, in such times, the drama flourishes most vitally. Men were as much influenced by that which they saw and heard as by that which they read. The stage was, at least, as important as the closet. History-plays had more influence than had the historical chronicle. Criticism was oral, and remained unwritten. Great writers were occupied with creation and not with criticism. The profession of dramatic critic did not exist, and a play was judged by the heart of spectators. In the temper of the times the drama turned often to history, and the dramatic poet found the materials for tragedy in the "storied past" chiefly of his own land. The ambition of the dramatist soared so high as—

> A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
> And monarchs to behold the swelling scene.

Elizabeth, always in full sympathy with the national life of

England, was a lover of the drama, and a patroness of the players. The Theatre then, both on and off its stage, was instinct and vital with the noble national life of an heroic time.

Blank verse became the natural language of a nature in art which often rose to the ideal, and rarely degenerated into commonplace. The drama became distinguished by force of originality, by grandeur of conception, by luxuriance of fancy, by splendour of imagination—the heroic always flowers into the ideal. The poet "could not sing the heroic warrior unless he himself were at least an heroic warrior too." The noble drama rose into true song.

Men's minds were then in England full of lively memories of the long struggles for the Crown, of wars of succession—as, for instance, those of the Roses, which were emblems in white and red of the houses of York and Lancaster—and of that long, momentous, picturesque civil strife and warfare which seemed to have ceased on the field of Bosworth. The "National Epic" of our romantic history, which was often so terribly dramatic, passing over the Norman kings, began to supply special materials for the dramatist in that Plantagenet period which extended over the years between 1154 and 1485; and the history-play rose to the level of abstract tragedy. Marlowe found in Edward II. and his terrible end, a fitting subject for his tragic muse. Shakespeare, beginning with King John, whose regal robes scarcely hid essential meanness, selected the reigns of Richard II., the Henries IV., V. and VI., Edward IV., and Richard III., for his Plantagenet themes; and he went beyond Plantagenet into Tudor times in the play of Henry VIII. A poet of our own day has dramatized the story of Mary Tudor. It was a tendency of the ideal, poetical, lofty tragedy of Elizabeth's great day to depict heroes and kings: kings who often had committed great crimes; crimes inspired mainly by ambition, by a fierce lust for "the golden round and top of sovereignty," and who were overtaken by Nemesis, and perished in desperation rather than in despair. Their criminal success culminated in a conflict, moral as well as physical, in which the heroic justice of the sword avenged wrong-doing and punished crime with death—with a soldier's death, because of their heroic qualities, and their ever present valour and prowess. Macbeth and Richard III. were both valiant warriors, and both die fighting desperately with that soldier courage which underlay their errors and nerved their crimes. The single combat between

rivals, between the representatives of the good and evil principles, is a complete dramatic solution of moral antagonism, and brings about a catastrophe which contents the moral sense through beauty and fitness of event. In single combat Macduff kills Macbeth, Richmond kills Richard, and Prince Henry, who had risen in nobleness until he was worthy to be victor, kills the very valiant rebel of the name of Hotspur. In such cases, the truth of the poet is of more value than the fact of the chronicler. It is unimportant that the hero may not always, as an historical fact, have slain the rebel or criminal in single fight. It is enough that the truth of the drama demands such an ideal settlement of an heroic quarrel.

Shakespeare was dramatically indifferent to archæological correctness, and spurned always the limitations of mere fact. The novel, or the chronicle, were mere quarries out of which he rough-hewed the material that he could shape by treatment, and use for the purposes of his lofty art. He pierced to the inmost heart and generic secret of the adventitious; and dealt with it in victorious strength and through clearest vision. His idealism was merely based upon the real. "The poet is an heroic soul belonging to all ages," but yet dwelling mainly in the essence of his own age. Shakespeare had for audience men brave, loyal, chivalrous, romantic; and he dwelt lovingly in the chivalries, courtesies, humours, romances, ambitions, thoughts of his own day. Hence, Hamlet is Shakespeare's contemporary—nay, Hamlet is even Shakespeare's countryman; for Denmark is but little more important in this tragedy than is the seacoast of Bohemia in the "Winter's Tale." The chronicle of Saxo-Grammaticus is a simple record, which yields a suggestion of such events as Shakespeare could mould into an abstract play, set in the manners and modes of thought which he knew and loved in connection with the spacious times of great Elizabeth. Of his personality, it is said by Jeremy Collier that "his genius was jocular, but, when disposed, he could be very serious." Such is the impression which such a man would naturally make upon those who, though they might even see and meet him, would not have the insight to pluck out the heart of his mystery. It is commonly said of great men that "you cannot tell whether they are in jest or earnest;" but to how many men can genius show its deepest earnestness? It must take refuge in jest, and try to suppress the thoughts for which it cannot

find fit audience. A Shakespeare could reveal his full self, his truest self, to but very few ; and those few have left little or no record of his personality. We can see him more truly in his work—in "Hamlet," or in "Othello"—than we can see him in any existing record of contemporaries. It is, however, distinctive that they always give him the epithet of "gentle" Shakespeare.

In the many deaths which occur in the tragedies of Shakespeare, it is noteworthy that his intellect should depict so strongly individuality of character running through superficial semblance of event. Note the pregnant difference of the deaths of King John and Henry IV. Both monarchs die, not in raging battle, but stretched out on quiet couches. The one perishes by fell poison, asking that he may be comforted with cold ; and the anguish of a death of physical torture subdues all feeling to that of physical agony, and excludes any thought of his country, any care for the dread hereafter. Henry IV. dies of exhausted nature, and the king, politic to the last, with policy something ennobled by the near approach of numbing death, remembers

> By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways
> I met this crown,

and warns his son how he may wear with better favour the diadem that

> Falls upon thee in a more fairer sort.

Macready marked finely the essential difference between the last hours of the two monarchs who had won the crown by such doubtful means, and had worn it through such struggles and difficulties.

The three finest studies in Shakespeare of desperate deaths by the sword, whether of foemen, or of suicide, are perhaps those of Antony, Macbeth, Richard III. ; and it seems worth while to devote a little thought to considering and comparing the deaths of the three princes who, differing in so many things, resemble each other in the fact that each one of them was a distinguished and dauntless warrior.

Thus, Antony, Macbeth, Richard, all perished by the sword ; though to the two latter was reserved the fairer fate of falling in hot blood, in fierce fight with the fatal foeman who avenged kingly crime with a soldier's death in the wild, red rage of battle. Antony falls in the high Roman fashion ; plays "the Roman fool, and dies on his own sword ;" but, putting aside pagan

usage, it is to be remembered that neither Macbeth nor Richard was enervated by the enslaving influence of voluptuous sin with a fair wanton. Neither Macbeth nor Richard was a voluptuary or a sensualist. They were not violators of marriage vows ; they were not lured by a regal harlot's wiles into a mad passion of disloyal and dissolute love. Macbeth and Richard were kings who wore unlineal crowns, won by force and fraud, by guile and crime ; while Antony was "the greatest prince o' the world."

In this respect the difference between Macbeth and Richard on the one hand, and Antony on the other, is based partly upon temperament and partly upon circumstance. Macbeth and Richard were too ambitious to be dissolute ; and they were actively engaged, during their short reigns, in retaining crowns which, won as theirs had been, were difficult to wear. Antony dissolved ambition in voluptuousness, and subsided into an ignoble lethargy of lust in sleepy Egypt. It must not be forgotten that Macbeth and Richard were not exposed to the fatal fascinations of a Cleopatra. All Macbeth's power of love was concentrated upon a terrible wife, who was fit to bring forth men children only.

The divine Nemesis of poetical justice leads Macbeth and Richard to a deserved doom ; but they die fighting sword in hand. All three were soldiers, and each added to the prowess of the individual knight that skilled valour of the general which could lead embattled hosts to victory. Many are the similarities, through unlikeness, between Richard and Macbeth. When they are brought close to "the doom's great image"—desperation in Richard brings out savagery, while Macbeth is desperate without becoming wholly demoniac. Macbeth, while a coward to his conscience, is a warrior to his foe ; when all fails him, when his better part of man is cowed by finding that he is the dupe of juggling fiends and the victim of deluding supernatural influences, when opposed to one that's not of woman born, he yet tries "the last." No prudence guides his valour, but all the soldier returns, as, in utter desperation, the warrior of the olden time fights that last fight which only leads to death.

Macbeth was naturally good ; Richard was naturally bad. Temptation comes to Macbeth from without, and changes him from a good man to a criminal and a tyrant. Temptation is in Richard himself. No supernatural solicitings excite his ambition ; no wife chastises him with the valour of a woman's tongue.

Macbeth says—

> I am in blood
> Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
> Returning were as tedious as go on.

Richard has the same thought, though it is finely differentiated by his different character. He says—

> But I am in
> So far in blood, that sin will pluck on sin—
> Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye.

Crime leads to crime, and bloodshed induces to more blood-spilling. Crowns won by murder must be maintained by continual assassination.

In Shakespeare the dramatic is elevated to its height, but is transcended by psychology. Through tragedy, and despite of crime, the poet always indicates the relations of the soul to the infinite. He is always full of those

> Thoughts too deep to be expressed,
> And too strong to be suppressed.

The abstract poet always soars above the playwright or theatre poet. The dramatist is so great because the poet is greater.

Macbeth, originally a loftier nature, is much more metaphysical than Richard. Macbeth is full of the high abstract thought that "transcends the ignorant present." Fate and life, and life beyond life, fill his full mind; and he can never wholly "jump the life to come." His native nobleness renders his melancholy so profound, the pathos of his fate so moving. He cannot quite quiet conscience; he cannot silence the "thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls." Even in his strained and stormy end of life, when Fate is gathering darkly round him to his doom, he feels that

> Life's but a walking shadow.

We detest, and yet deplore, Macbeth's crimes; but we never cease to feel sympathy with the royal criminal. It is conscience that will not let him "sleep in spite of thunder."

Richard is a villain of a different and deeper dye. In him is no buried nobleness, which will rise from its grave. He is not metaphysical; he does not rise to high regions of thought. He has no melancholy, no pathos, few redeeming traits, and we loathe alike crime and criminal. The wickedest of English kings is represented as one of the greatest villains of the drama.

Richard, indeed, except for his splendid courage, resembles an Italian tyrant of the Renaissance. He has no conscience, pity, ruth, remorse, or tenderness. "Richard III." is the most fiery tragedy of the drama. It is thickly studded with most terrible events, and moves stormily in a swift current of restless action. Richard has absolutely no faith, and has as little fear. He treats Heaven itself with cynical mockery. He says—

> But then I sigh; and with a piece of Scripture,
> Tell them that God bids us do good for evil;
> And thus I clothe my naked villainy
> With old odd ends stolen out of Holy Writ;
> And seem a saint when most I play the devil.

Devil-like, he gloats in his own hypocrisy. The doomed, beguiled Hastings, thinks and says—

> For, by his face, straight shall you know his heart.

When they come to offer him that crown for which he so longs, he, the hard sceptic, is found conversing with two bishops. He is, indeed, "bloody, bold, and resolute." He is fierce even in guile; he is ferocious in his sarcasms and his sneers; he has the bitterness of deformity; he is full of passion and of power; he is inflexible, self-reliant, and terribly swift in dæmonic action. He is sanguine as cruel. There is something of magic in his intense personality; and he has a singular power of swaying women to his will. Anne's "woman's heart grossly grew captive to his honey words;" and Edward's widow, after Richard's murder of her sons, is subdued to his purposes:

> I must be married to my brother's daughter,
> Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass.
> Murder her brothers, and then marry her!
> Uncertain way of gain!

But he hesitates at no "way of gain," however villanous, or even uncertain.

> The high imperial type of this world's glory

excites his ambition, and

> The aspiring flame of golden sovereignty

arouses his ferocious ability.

The excess and success of his villany create his danger:

> Every man's conscience is a thousand swords
> To fight against that bloody homicide;

of whom Blount says that—

> He hath no friends but who are friends for fear.

Events hurry on, and Richmond's title is made strong in the strength of a nation's indignation. Richard says—

> I have not that alacrity of spirit,
> Nor cheer of mind that I was wont to have.

He reaches the last scene of all—Bosworth Field—and bids them—

> Up with my tent there! here will I lie to-night;
> But where to-morrow? Well, all's one for that.

And then, on the same small stage, which was an ideal scene for the imagination, the tents of Richard and of Richmond are both pitched; and to tyrant and to hero come the dreams which depress the one and inspirit the other—

> Soft! I did but dream.
> O, coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!

Not even the firm nerves of Richard can wholly escape the torments of a conscience so laden with guilt; but, unlike Macbeth, he feels no tenderness, strays into no supernatural fancies. He drives away thought and plunges into fierce action—

> Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
> Devised at first to keep the strong in awe:
> Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.

He half reasons with himself, while thus addressing his followers; but nevertheless he feels—

> I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
> And if I die, no soul shall pity me.

Henry V. excites to battle with noble war thoughts, but savage Richard, at bay, seeks to

> Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons.

With awe, and with a reluctant admiration, we watch the last desperate effort of a courage which was never wanting in the ruthless Plantagenet—

> A thousand hearts are great within my bosom.

After slaying five Richmonds, the frantic warrior, flushed with the dæmonic fury which leads him to his fate, meets with Richmond himself, "in the throat of death," and is slain in single combat. Richmond says that Richard was

> Truly, gentlemen,
> A bloody tyrant and a homicide;
> One raised in blood, and one in blood established;
> One that made means to come by what he hath,
> And slaughter'd those that were the means to help him.

And yet we forgive something—even to such crimes as his—when he tries "the last," fights with a desperate courage which enables him to enact "more wonders than a man," and falls so resolutely with his fierce face grimly set in death and turned towards his foe.

The stern alarums cease. The points of war, the trumpet blasts, the clash of swords, die out on northern battle-fields, and our fancy turns to the palms and temples, to the quays and palaces rising out of the banks of the calm, wide Nile. We are in mystic Egypt, and around us are the languor, the heat, the sun, the colour of the sleepy, gorgeous East. "The greatest prince of the world" is dallying in revel and in riot with the most imperial wanton of history or poetry. Antony is with Cleopatra; and the sumptuous harlot has put her tires and mantles on him whilst she "wears his sword Philippan." In a swoon of love dalliance, the more than regal strumpet and her captive warrior neglect empire and the cares of State, and live idly, steeped in sensuous pleasure and in ignoble passion. Antony, unmanned, has lapsed from his high estate, forgets even ambition.

> O, then we bring forth weeds
> When our quick minds lie still.

The avenger of Julius Cæsar, the conqueror of "the all-honoured, honest Roman, Brutus," and of the lean and wrinkled Cassius, is sunk and debased into dissolute degradation.

He is in the toils of one of the witch-women of history; of one of those rare and dangerous women to whom are given the dæmonic gift of fatal magic and irresistible witchery and charm; of one of those women created to work evil and ruin to great, weak men.

In Antony's defence it may be urged that he is a victim of demoniacal possession.

> Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety; other women cloy
> The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
> Where most she satisfies.

He is enchanted, enslaved, infatuated. The slow-gliding tide of time, and the revels of sensuality, are leading him to ruin, disgrace, despair. He shall waken from the spells of false, foul love, to die in desperation. O, the pity of it!—and Shakespeare brings out all the pathos of a hero's fall.

Antony and Cleopatra are the names of immortally coupled lovers; of a pair whose fame is as indissolubly linked together as —though on different grounds—are those of Romeo and Juliet; and the same great poet has joined them in his song. Of Antony it is recorded that sometimes—

> A Roman thought hath struck him;

and at such times he vainly chafes against his chains. In one of those high abstract thoughts with which, in Shakespeare, the poet so frequently transcends the dramatist, he lets Antony feel—

> But when we in our viciousness grow hard—
> O misery on't! the wise gods seel our eyes;
> In our own filth drop our clear judgments; make us
> Adore our errors; laugh at's while we strut
> To our confusion.

Clear-sighted enough to see that he was treading the path which leads to destruction, his depraved will had grown so weak that he could not control or escape from his fatal dotage—flower-soft chains had grown too strong for him.

The image of the sumptuous Greek tropic beauty of splendid Cleopatra floats for ever down the stream of time as we fancy her reclining upon her gilded barge, propelled by silver oars, wafted by silken sails, attended by the music of soft, clear flutes, with tackle worked by flower-soft hands. The towering fantasy of our great poet has here produced a picture of most voluptuous glory, in which the mighty line thrills and quivers with music and expression pushed to the very utmost height to which human faculty can attain.

Actium gives up Antony to horror and disgrace.

> Egypt, thou knew'st too well
> My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings.

When she "hoists sails and flies," Antony, "like a doting mallard, leaving the fight in height, flies after her." The warrior is ruined by the wanton.

And yet, in his better moments, Antony's better nature is cursed by knowing Cleopatra to be what she was, and feels the base misery of knowing her, while he recognizes his own fatal infatuation. His will becomes "lord of his reason," and a kiss repays the degraded lover for losing half the world. The "itch of his affection" ruined his captainship; and, in his fall, Antony shows more of the tumult than of the depth of his soul. "A

most unnoble swerving" loses for him victory and reputation and self-command. He boastfully challenges "the high-battled Cæsar" to single combat. Says Enobarbus:

> I see men's judgments are
> A parcel of their fortunes, and things outward
> Do draw the inward quality after them.

And there is pathos in it too. With Antony's falling fortune comes failing intellect. Shakespeare shows each variation and shadow of turning in the strained mind of the hero tottering to his inevitable fall. One mood is that of desperation and consequent ferocity. There is yet a chance of opposing Octavius by land at Alexandria, and Antony will furiously try there to check the victor's fortune.

> Dost thou hear, lady?
> If from the field I shall return once more
> To kiss those lips, I will appear in blood;
> I and my sword will earn our chronicle—
> * * * *
> I will be treble-sinewed, hearted, breathed,
> And fight maliciously; for when mine hours
> Were nice and lucky, men did ransom lives
> Of me for jests; but now I'll set my teeth,
> And send to darkness all that stop me. Come,
> Let's have one other gaudy night.

And for the last time shall Antony and Cleopatra once again waste "the lamps of night in revel."

Listen to the wise comment of that Enobarbus, who seeks "some way to leave him"—

> To be furious
> Is to be frighted out of fear; and in that mood
> The dove will peck the estridge.

Next follows—

> One of those odd tricks which sorrow shoots
> Out of the mind;

when Antony says to his servitors—

> Tend me to-night;
> May be it is the period of your duty;
> Haply you shall not see me more; or if,
> A mangled shadow; perchance to-morrow
> You'll serve another master. I look on you
> As one that takes his leave.

In his mad excitement, Antony cries—

> I would they'ld fight i' the fire or i' the air;
> We'ld fight there too.

Then we hear it said of him—

Antony
Is valiant and dejected, and by starts
His fretted fortunes give him hope and fear.

And then comes that burst of deepest, most desperate sadness—

All is lost;
This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me.
* * * *
Tripled-turned whore! 'tis thou
Hast sold me to this novice, and my heart
Makes only wars on thee.

Not Cæsar, but Cleopatra, vanquishes the doomed Antony. He falls upon his sword; she escapes being dragged in Cæsar's Roman triumph by the asp's bite. The high fortune of death in the front of battle, and by the foeman's sword, is not reserved for the lascivious, enervated Antony. He perishes by suicide, and then—

The long day's task is done,
And we must sleep.

Cleopatra was thirty-nine, and Antony fifty-three, when they thus died in Egypt.

She was the last of that dynasty of Greek royalty in Egypt, which began with Ptolemæus, B.C. 323.

It is with a sort of amused indignation that we regard Lord Coke, who, absorbed in his law studies, abstained from going to see the plays of Shakespeare, or Shakespeare the player. Could we have such a chance—we who have learned perhaps to rank Shakespeare more highly than his contemporaries ranked him—we should not neglect an opportunity of seeing his plays acted in the manner which he contemplated, with the means upon which he could reckon, and with an absence of scenic effect which probably tended to render the stage and acting more ideal. In the history-plays, the National Epic is treated with a lofty patriotism which, coming to us from so great a day, should teach a noble lesson to the England of our day. "The eminence, the nobleness of a people depends in its capability of being stirred by memories, and of striving for what we call spiritual ends—ends which consist not in immediate material possessions, but in the satisfaction of a great feeling that animates the collective body as with one soul." So says George Eliot. And who teaches us the high truth so finely as our poet Shakespeare? It is noteworthy that in his characters which, from the adventitious side chiefly, bear a certain superficial resemblance to each

other, there is always inherent unlikeness and varying discrepancy. His villains are of differing quality and calibre. Iachimo is not like Edmund; neither of them bears any spiritual resemblance to Iago. The same truth obtains in connection with the three characters which we have just been considering.

Macbeth, Richard III., Mark Antony, though the two former especially are placed in somewhat similar circumstances, yet all differ widely in essential characteristics. Their strongest point of adventitious resemblance consists in this—that the three die Three Desperate Deaths.

# "Boz" and the Play.

By Godfrey Turner.

THE most depressing things in life are those which leave a sadness that cannot be accounted for. How we "caught it, found it, or came by it," we are as puzzled to learn as was Antonio when he had much ado to know himself. The mere vagueness of the impression makes it more irksome than any definite feeling of regret would be. For myself, I am often at a loss to understand why any passing melancholy should cloud my spirits when I rise from the perusal of modern bibliography. Is it that I am led to lament the loss of treasures I once possessed, or might have cheaply obtained, but never rightly valued till too late? It may be so. There is not one of the earlier publications in the Dickens list, now so rare and high-priced, which I did not possess when a boy. I owned, and thought nothing of owning, one of those 400 first numbers of "Pickwick," which were all that Mr. Bone was required to stitch in the green covers, and which, as I am now informed, are as priceless as green pearls. "Sunday under Three Heads" I carelessly gave away. "Oliver Twist," with the cancelled plate, so thoroughly Cruikshankian, yet so strangely repugnant to Dickens that he insisted on having a substitute, was mine; yet I regarded it not. "Nicholas Nickleby" I bought, month by month, wet from the press. So eager was I to read "The Christmas

Carol," that I must certainly have had one of the first impressions of the first edition, now worth £5. When I had read it, I sold it for the exact price I had given for it—5*s*. There was no free trade in books, then ; no discount of twenty-five per cent. for cash. The full publishing price was paid even for music ; though nowadays one would as soon think of giving sixpence for a sixpenny cake of Pears' soap as three shillings for a three-shilling song by Tosti. Ah ! if I had but kept *Bentley's Miscellany*, and "Pickwick," and "Nickleby," and the "Carol," and the "Chimes," and "The Cricket on the Hearth," and "The Battle of Life," and "The Haunted Man" !

Mr. John F. Dexter's "Hints to Dickens Collectors," in the "Dickens Memento," lately published by Messrs. Field & Tuer, are valuable ; and it has seemed to me that some part of them must especially interest actors, who need no telling how dearly Charles Dickens loved the stage. Is it known to many that he was once very near taking the Strand Theatre ? Nothing would have restrained him from a rush into theatrical management but the solemn warning which, at the time, now far distant, he received from a man of law, that he would be making himself liable for untold obligations. If he had been an actor, though a certain hardness and dry conventional exaggeration somewhat checked the natural flow of his humour—a suspicion of this conventionalism now and then appearing in his otherwise admirable reading of the "Carol"—he must have shone in eccentric comedy. Though, as an executant, Charles Dickens was not quite so unctuous in his elaboration of character as could have been wished, he was still more wanting in freedom and originality as a playwright. The fact that he left unguarded most of his meagre work in that capacity speaks for itself. He was not generally careless of his copyrights ; but he must have felt that his dramatic pieces were nothing worth. "The Village Coquettes," a comic opera, the music being composed by his friend, John Hullah, has had a somewhat wider celebrity than subsequent "plays" from his pen have attained. Of the songs, perhaps the best is—or was, for it is quite obsolete—"There's a charm in Spring." It is very juvenile, and cramped in its juvenility. "The opera," says Mr. Dexter, "was printed and published by Bradbury and Evans (?) in 1837, and sold for tenpence in the theatre. It now sells for £2 2*s*." The songs were pub-

lished separately by Cramer, Addison, & Beale. "The Strange Gentleman," and "Is She His Wife? or, Something Singular," were subsequent pieces, by Dickens, at the St. James's; and playbills of each are worth a guinea. "One of these playbills," I again quote, "is exceedingly curious, and gives particulars of a song that no one seems to have mentioned or even heard of. It was sung on the occasion of Mr. Harley's benefit at the St. James's Theatre, Monday, March 13, 1837." We are in the period, let it be remembered, when Charles Dickens was still "Boz." Under the cast of "Is She His Wife?" occurs the following announcement:—

> Mr. Harley will, in the character of Mr. Pickwick, make his first visit to the St. James's Theatre, and relate, to a Scotch air, his experiences of a "whitebait dinner at Blackwall," edited expressly for him by his biographer, "Boz."

I have an indistinct impression that the "Scotch air" was "There's nae luck about the house," and that the word "whitebait" was divided, so that the first syllable, "white," concluded a line, the next line being "-bait dinner at Blackwall." Some such song I heard sung a year or two later, but not by Harley. He never *played* Pickwick, nor would he have been particularly well fitted for the part; though an actor, whose memory I cherish, Anthony Younge, one of the Harley school, *did* play the character as well as it was ever possible for any one to play it.

"Mr. Nightingale's Diary," written by Charles Dickens and Mark Lemon, and played as an after-piece when the amateur company, led by Dickens, and including Douglas Jerrold, Frank Stone, John Forster, Dudley Costello, Augustus Egg, and others of literary and artistic note, performed Sir Edward Lytton-Bulwer's comedy, "Not so Bad as We Seem," served its purpose, and there an end. It is worth remarking, that the earliest attempts at authorship by Charles Dickens took a dramatic form. He and his biographer, John Forster, both speak of certain nursery tragedies, achieved at the age of eight or ten. No actor will need to be told how ready was the helping hand which Charles Dickens extended on such interesting occasions of charitable confederacy as have been made historical by the records of the General Theatrical Fund. His friendships in the mimic world were real and hearty. Macready and Fechter, at an interval of many years, are notable instances.

# A Ballad of Fate.

Priests can foretell, but not avert the future.—Landor.

I.

WE idle thro' the days of youth,
And think not of the coming years;
But could we learn the future's ruth,
What need there were of fearful tears.
Talk not of woe, ye gloomy seers,
Crush not our souls with joy elate,
It matters not our trembling fears—
For who can change the word of Fate?

II.

Youth is the season of delight,
Life's bowl for us o'erflows with wine;
We dream of pleasure day and night,
While Phryne's kisses seem divine.
Ah, then why think of rheumy eyne,
Of weary heart and halting gait,
Let red lips kiss—and bright eyes shine,
For who can change the word of Fate?

III.

'Tis vain to think of coming woes,
When flowers will fall from tresses gray;
The future comes—the present goes,
Then let us live our lives to-day.
Let us be happy while we may,
The flying moments will not wait;
Life cannot alter—tho' we pray—
For who can change the word of Fate?

ENVOI.

Think not of woes we may endure,
Tho' coming sorrows may be great;
The present only is secure,
For who can change the word of Fate?

F. W. Hume.

Dunedin, N.Z.

# Mr. Irving's Second Tour in America.

Brooklyn, *March* 6.

BROOKLYN is called the "City of Churches" by people who take a practical view of it, and the "Dormitory of New York" by persons who are cynically prosaic. Certainly the number of churches is remarkable; a piece of ecclesiastical architecture seems to strike the eye of the stranger at every corner. There is no exceptional beauty in these edifices, as there is in one or two churches in Boston; and perhaps an actor's mind is most impressed by what is called "the little church round the corner," in New York, where the obsequies of old John Purselle were performed the other day. Whether any saint's name was ever attached to this particular place of worship I don't know; but the fond familiarity with which it is designated suggests no contempt, for it enjoys a tradition which is much respected by the dramatic profession. When some bigoted parson years ago refused to read the service for the dead over an actor, the indignant mourners took the body to "the little church round the corner," which has ever since been held in high honour by dramatic artists in New York, and has derived no small advantage from their liberality. Peradventure, the bigoted parson regarded this as an alliance with the Mammon of unrighteousness; and he may be strengthened in this conviction by the elevated principle which persuaded the fox as to the acidity of certain grapes.

I should not call Brooklyn the abode of delirious bliss, but the people are quite capable of excitement over the visit of a theatrical company without waiting till they can see the play in New York. There is one lady in this city whose emotions will always be remembered by some of us with pleasure and pride. She is the genius of a boarding-house—a delightful vision in an apron—and beams daily on a merry party of forty-seven who sit down to dinner. The wife of a member of Mr. Irving's company had occasion to look for some rooms, and was breathlessly invited with her husband to join the forty-seven. The lady of the boarding-house was intensely interested. Did her visitor act? No; then

could she get an order? "Yes! How lovely! Why, we can go together, and you shall have a comfortable dinner, and I'll throw that in!"

But I must take up the story after our departure from Washington, with the glamour of official condescension still in my imagination. There is no soul-destroying conventionalism in the habits of American politicians. They don't bow down to a fetish in the shape of a Speaker in a wig, and though they have a tradition that the march of the Sergeant-at-Arms through the House with the mace on his shoulder quells disorder at once, I fancy that even this gorgeous pageant would not awe the spirit of a Congressman from Kentucky. And, whatever betides, the American politician will still eat oysters with a refreshing lack of ceremony. Down on a wharf by the Potomac there is a quaint hovel or "shanty" where hungry legislators eat roast oysters as fast as they can be extracted from the smoking shell by industrious negroes. And I cherish the memory of the last morning in Washington, when I sought the society of orators in this Arcadian retreat, and was welcomed by the burly purveyor of oysters, who made me eat molluscs of phenomenal fatness, and sent me away with his blessing. May the dews of good fortune fall thickly on that genial oysterman's head, and enable him to sustain the sinews of the American Government! The oyster plays a great part in the affairs of this nation; and it sometimes seems as if the world here had grown to a vast oyster-bed,

> To munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
> Breakfast, dinner, supper, luncheon,

like the universal drysaltery which the rat dreamt of in "The Pied Piper of Hamelin."

The return visit to Philadelphia enabled Mr. Irving to express a very natural gratification that he and his company had met with so much success in the most conservative city in America. Throughout the engagement the audiences showed even greater interest and warmer feeling than before, and the general sentiment of regard for the English tragedian, and of regret at his departure, found very apt and eloquent expression at the supper given to him by a number of the most prominent citizens in Philadelphia. It was in many ways a happy occasion, for Mr. Irving took the opportunity to recall that in this city he received, on his first visit, one of the heartiest and most valuable acknow-

ledgments of his services to the stage. People in Philadelphia have been the foremost and the most frank in the admission that Mr. Irving has made acting "a learned profession," and that he has helped to put a vast gulf between the stage of to-day and the stage of the not very distant period when it was necessary for one American manager, who found a member of his company drunk on the night of the performance, to hunt for a substitute in a faro bank, and deal the cards himself while the actor was at the theatre.

With the modern ideal of the drama—the ideal which treats the whole as greater than the part—there is no one in Philadelphia more prompt to sympathize than Mr. Horace Furniss. Mr. Furniss enjoys a great reputation for his variorum edition of several of Shakespeare's plays—an edition that is a worthy monument of loving and conscientious labour combined with a very rare and discriminating insight. To any student of Shakespeare a visit to Mr. Furniss's house in the quaint old square, through the trees of which one expects to see one of Mr. George Boughton's Puritan maidens wending her way demurely, must be a great delight. The library is a museum of books and relics relating to the poet. Here is Yorick's skull inscribed with the names of the famous actors who used it when they played "Hamlet" in Philadelphia. Here, in a glass case, is a pair of gloves believed to have been worn by Shakespeare himself, and certainly given in that belief by some of his descendants to John Ward, and presented by him to Garrick. The sceptic may shake his head over such a relic, but its authenticity is at least more probable than that of most of the relics that have been revered by generations. Here is the First Folio, and—still more curious—some copies of the old Quartos, with their catch-penny titles, such as "The Comicall Historie of the Merchant of Venice." The many rows of little drawers labelled with the names of plays and full of diverse memoranda give some indication of the work that goes on in that room; and more interesting still is the conversation of the host, whose mind is steeped in all the lore of the subject to which he has devoted more than twenty years of his life, and yet is wholly free from the lumber of pedantry and the arrogance of Sir Oracle. Mr. Furniss is unfortunately the victim of a physical infirmity which reduces his enjoyment of the theatre to small proportions; but he had seen "The Merchant of Venice," and though,

unhappily, it conveyed nothing to his ear, he was full of genuine enthusiasm about the stage pictures—the eloquence of face, gesture, and attitude—which had taken his imagination captive, and made the story live before his eyes.

There is another figure in Philadelphia to whose retreat it is instructive to make a pilgrimage. When you look into the shop-windows your eye is often caught by the picture of an old man of most picturesque aspect—a face that suggests a kind of amalgamate Lear and Rip Van Winkle with a slight dash of Father Christmas. When he is well enough, the old man may be seen in the streets in a costume fully as picturesque as himself—a big felt hat, a coat that rouses reminiscences of the opera, and more especially an open collar and large cuffs of spotless whiteness. In his house at Camden, on the other side of the Delaware, Walt Whitman is more interesting still. It is a simple wooden dwelling, furnished like a log-hut in the backwoods. There are no carpets; at the head of the stairs is piled the wood with which the veteran replenishes the fire in his little stove; the room in which he works is also his bed-room; papers litter the table and the floor; an old print or two from an illustrated newspaper decorate the walls. The poet is as simple as his surroundings, and talks of the preface he is writing to a volume of poems—a preface that gives him some trouble, for prefaces nowadays are of much moment to a public that yearns after the personality of an author. Then he tells stories of the time during the war when he lived at Washington, which was then a city of hospitals; and he asks questions about Tennyson, and Browning, and Ruskin, and does not seem at all disturbed by the vials of wrath which the author of "Modern Painters" has poured upon the material and mechanical products of modern civilization which Walt Whitman has sung in dithyrambic strains. If Mr. Ruskin could see the simple life which this old man leads—a kind of pastoral life in a suburb of a great city—he would feel not unkindly towards the poet who finds music and rhythm in the puffing of a locomotive. There are many people who cannot see that Walt Whitman's writing has any claim to be called poetry, who hold that his repudiation of all ordinary forms of verse reduces his composition to pretty much the condition of the world at the opening of Genesis—without form and void—and that the tumbling waves of adjectives which he pours out without stint express the maximum of sound and the minimum of

idea. Well, it is possible to believe all this, and yet to admire Walt Whitman's prose. I have before me the preface to a little volume of his—a preface in which America to-day is described with rugged originality, and her mission pictured with at least some approach to an ideal. "Our America to-day I consider in many respects as but indeed a vast seething mass of materials, ampler, better (worse also) than previously known—eligible to be used to carry towards its crowning stage, and build for good, the great Ideal Nationality of the future, the nation of Body and Soul —no limit here to land, help, opportunities, mines, products, demands, supplies, &c.—with (I think) our political organization, National, State, and Municipal, permanently established, as far ahead as we can calculate—but, so far, no social, literary, religious, or æsthetic organizations, consistent with our politics, or becoming to us—which organizations can only come in time through native schools or teachers of great Democratic Ideals—Religion—through Science, which now, like a new sunrise ascending, begins to illuminate all—and through our begotten Poets and Literatuses." America is to become "the grand Producing Land of nobler Men and Women—the modern composite nation, formed for all, with room for all." But to attain this consummation America, "and indeed all Christian lands everywhere," must be delivered from "the thin, moribund, and watery, but appallingly extensive nuisance of conventional poetry." I am afraid that this "nuisance," moribund though it may be, will die hard, and that, generations hence, poets will still woo the Muses with those classic forms which Walt Whitman despises as unworthy of the genius of Democracy.

Mr. Ruskin might not find a tour through America altogether soothing to his perturbed spirit ; but there is something in Philadelphia that ought to save it from his brimstone. Though there may not be five righteous men in that city, there is an unmistakably fine Turner. This is the property of Mr. Thomas Donaldson, who, in many rambles through America and abroad, has collected all manner of curios. The American collector is indefatigable. I know a man in New York who visits Europe every year with a special mission. This year he may be in search of antique spoons, next year may be devoted to venerable forks. His chief joy is a collection of death-masks of celebrated persons, which he ranges in a row, and lectures upon with all the solemnity befitting the

subject. When Mr. Irving bought a rare book about Edmund Kean at a sale in London the other day, his chief competitor was an American living in Chicago, who walked into the theatre there one morning, and magnanimously congratulated the actor on his purchase. But Mr. Donaldson has a patriotic eye for American industries. He may possess Turners, and Corots, and Meissoniers, but he has a lively faith in the painters of his country, who ought to be numerous, seeing that one family alone contains nineteen artists, and every one of them who is married has made his wife an artist too. Mr. Donaldson collects palettes and chairs—there are the palettes of distinguished painters and the chairs of American Presidents. Books and manuscripts stacked away in apparently inextricable confusion, relics of Indian warfare, rare geological specimens, trinkets that belonged to Josephine and other more or less ill-fated personages long since returned to dust—all these make a medley of inexhaustible interest. A collector, however, is never satisfied, and I suspect Mr. Donaldson of hankering after one thing at present beyond his reach. This is, the first set of false teeth ever made in America, and worn by no less a person than Washington himself. It was made by a man named Paul Kauffmann, and it is now in the New Orleans Exhibition. These false teeth must have made many mouths water, and tormented many bumps of acquisitiveness. Not that your collector nowadays ever dreams of looting. A stern integrity has always characterized the American conscience in these matters. When Collingwood was about to bombard Antwerp, the authorities of that city sent all their Rubens pictures in a ship to the United States. The precious cargo escaped the British cruisers—unfortunately for the National Gallery—and found a temporary asylum at Annapolis, in Maryland. Yet the Americans did not dream of appropriating these treasures, and such true honesty should be remembered to the lasting honour of this nation, especially by the English author, who is selfishly aggrieved because he is read for ten cents by a great people who have learned the value of his writings without going through the trifling form of paying him for them.

There are some curious echoes of old-world history in Philadelphia. An interesting citizen is Christian Schmidt, who, despite his ninety-five years, still "wears his manhood hale and green," and vividly recalls the time when he served against Napoleon in the regiment of which Wellington was honorary colonel and in

which the Emperor William was second lieutenant. Everybody has seen at Madame Tussaud's the carriage from which Napoleon barely escaped at Waterloo before its capture. Well, old Schmidt was on the spot when that notable event occurred; and, if the proprietors of Madame Tussaud's want a useful hint, they might do worse than obtain a portrait-model of this old soldier, and place it on guard at the carriage-door. Christian Schmidt is a musician, and forty-five years ago he led an orchestra in Philadelphia, and has earned no small fame as the man who first taught music to the blind in America. When he celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his entry into the Prussian army, the Emperor William sent him a gold medal; and still he carries on a gallant struggle against time, for since that jubilee at least a quarter of a century must have passed over his head.

Philadelphia has its war memories too; and people have not forgotten how on the morning of the second day at Gettysburg, only a few hours distant, the false news that the Union forces had been totally worsted in that desperate struggle caused a panic in the city. The amicable controversies between Federal and Confederate writers about the history of some famous battles have revived the public interest in the war in a remarkable degree. This may account for the fact that on nearly every occasion when I have listened to American oratory the war has been discussed as if it were a recent episode. Some people professed to be shocked the other day when Mr. Jefferson Davis's Southern friends in Congress paid him a public tribute; but, generally speaking, the cause of the Confederacy is treated with respect, and those who fought for it are perfectly cheerful and contented over its grave. If the old military spirit occasionally bursts out, the demonstration is harmless. There was a curious scene in the theatre at Washington one night, when a gentleman who held a military command during the war had a slight dispute with another citizen about his seat. There was a soldier sitting hard by, and he joined in the argument. "Do you know who this is?" he said. "This is Governor Curtain, and he must have a seat; ay, the best seat in the house. I don't care what it costs; I'm ready to pay for it!" And he pulled out a handful of greenbacks. This mode of settling the matter was not practicable; but it was a pleasant illustration of the fidelity of the soldier to his old commander—whom he had probably not seen for many years.

Mr. Irving might have had wholly agreeable recollections of his last visit to Boston but for the indisposition which kept him from the stage for three nights, though happily it had no other serious effect. His absence left a gap which could not possibly be filled; but Miss Terry, who luckily was in capital health, exerted herself with extraordinary energy, and, with the excellent support she received from Mr. Alexander, Mr. Mead, Mr. Wenman, and Mr. Tyars, she showed that the organization of the company, though shaken, was not shattered by the temporary loss of its chief. When Mr. Irving returned to play Louis XI. on the last night, he was received with a burst of acclamation which proved that his brief absence had been acutely felt, and that a Boston audience can be roused to express great warmth of feeling. In his speech after the fall of the curtain, Mr. Irving, with a pleasant suspicion of banter, remarked that "a blind and reckless enthusiasm was not characteristic of Boston." Well, the people there may not be always bubbling with sensibility; nor can one fairly expect that every story of Boston shall be a tribute to its culture. A Bostonian lady is said to have expressed her surprise that Shakespeare did not write a play about Charles I. "It would have been such a beautiful play," she declared. "But Shakespeare died before Charles was born," objected a friend. "Ah, well, but Shakespeare is full of anachronisms!" was the triumphant reply. It would not be fair to found sarcastic generalizations against Boston culture on this story, any more than to take advantage of the *naïveté* of a little Boston girl who wrote to Miss Terry, "Dear Miss Terry, I do so love you and Mr. Shakespeare." Bostonians have their foibles, which Mr. Henry James is agreeably satirizing in his new story; but their literary and artistic coteries have created an atmosphere which an Englishman finds it very pleasant to breathe. There is no place where one can spend a more delightful evening than at the Tavern Club, especially when the members muster in force, under the presidency of Mr. W. D. Howells, to entertain a visitor like Mr. Irving or Mr. Lawrence Barrett. When we were in Boston in October, Mr. Irving was on one occasion the guest of the club; and, after supper, the party adjourned upstairs to the studio of Mr. Frederick Vinton, an admirable artist, who has painted, amongst other things, a life-like portrait of Mr. William Warren, the veteran comedian of Boston, and the best Sir Peter Teazle the American stage has seen.

Boston has a strong musical element, and the symphony concerts have been endowed by Mr. Higginson with a very large sum, without any reference to commercial speculation. It is not surprising that this munificence has done much to encourage a colony of musicians; and on these convivial occasions at the Tavern Club the enjoyment is greatly enhanced by vocal and instrumental music, especially the violin-playing of Mr. Adimowski, which could not fail to excite admiration in the most critical circles.

Englishmen who read the other day that Lord Granville had refused Mr. Boyle O'Reilly permission to lecture in Canada, may have had some trouble in tracing Mr. O'Reilly's history. He was concerned, when a mere boy, in the Fenian conspiracy of 1866, and was sentenced for a very serious offence to transportation. Mr. O'Reilly escaped from prison in Australia, and gave what money he could obtain to the captain of an American ship, who promised to take him on board. This man played him false, sailing away with his money and leaving him in an open boat. He returned to land and lived in a precarious manner till another American captain, who had heard of the first incident, received him on board, and after a seven months' cruise landed him on American soil. On the way they overtook in some port the sailor who had behaved so shamefully, and who came to see his fellow-captain, serenely unconscious that the man he had wronged was so near him. As soon as he set his foot on the deck, the other officer calmly said, "I have a friend down below who is very anxious to meet you," and without a word the culprit restored the money he had gained by such infamous fraud. An even more dramatic incident was to come. Both captains came from New Bedford, Massachusetts, and here Mr. O'Reilly was advised by his friend to give a lecture on his experiences. His story excited public interest, and an overflowing audience assembled to hear him. Near the platform sat the defaulting captain, drawn by some fascination to the spot, and pale as a man who is about to hear a crushing accusation. The lecturer related his adventures in detail till he came to the heartless robbery and desertion; then he paused, looked his pallid and cowering enemy straight in the face, and passed on without saying a word of the narrative which would have brought utter disgrace and humiliation on this man in the presence of his fellow-citizens. It is a misfortune that the Queen cannot command the allegiance of an Irishman

who could show such rare magnanimity. Mr. O'Reilly is now the editor of a Boston newspaper, he has written some striking verse; and he is one of the four authors of a very singular novel, published last year, called "The King's Men," a satire on English society, especially the aristocracy, which was much too strong for English publishers. When you consider that the story forecasts the time when England becomes a Republic, describes a futile attempt to restore Royalty, and pictures the Archbishop of Canterbury and the leading members of the nobility as reduced to the necessity of letting themselves as dinner guests to American millionaires, you will see that the imagination of Mr. O'Reilly and his collaborators was not very severely chastened. And yet there are scenes in the book which it is not easy to forget.

The stranger in Boston who visits Harvard College may not find it as picturesque as Oxford, but he cannot fail to be struck by the statue of John Harvard, which is an interesting specimen of imaginative art. For John is personally little more than a shadow, though he was the promoter of this seat of learning. There is no portrait of him extant; nothing is known of his personal appearance save that it was "reverend and godlike," which savours of hyperbolical epitaphs. He came from England, like the rest of the Conscript Fathers of America, but little has been gleaned there concerning his family history. Never was a man who gave his name to a great public institution so nebulous to the generations which have profited by his enterprise. But the sculptor has taken the meagre description of John Harvard, and has produced a very imposing figure. He is said to have been guided somewhat by two autographs of Harvard, which are pretty nearly all of that worthy's literary remains. If you can argue from a man's handwriting as to his personal appearance, some of us ought to suffer on canvas or in marble; but John Harvard is represented as saintly and benignant. This may be a pure idealization of his exterior, but as nobody knows for certain, and as no one is injured by Mr. French's statue, the advocates of uncompromising realism in art must be rather nonplussed. There is originality, too, in the exhibitions of the Art Club and the Paint and Clay Club; and something more than a local fame ought to be attained by a young artist named Gaugengigl, whose work has a minute and Meissonier-like finish. But I am afraid the statuary in Boston is on the whole as unsatisfying as that in London. Even the juvenile Bostonians are not awed by eques-

trian statues of Washington, and on that hero's birthday I was grieved to see a small boy throwing snowballs at the Father of his country.

It is a delicate matter in America to praise one city more than another. If you do not dissemble your love, you are likely to find some resentful person who wants to kick you downstairs. It is much safer to abuse the Rocky Mountains than to say that you like Boston better than New York, or Philadelphia, or Chicago. An English Professor who visited Philadelphia lately, said that the public buildings there filled him with sadness. The Philadelphians were not much hurt by this; but if he had said that he would rather live in Boston than amongst them they would probably have wiped the floor with him. It is hard that an Englishman may not express his delight when he is reminded in Boston of some of his beloved institutions: for instance, when the Bostonian breezes in February pleasantly recall the zephyrs that blow from the east in his own balmy isle. But it must not be. The Briton who has parted from Boston, and gone, let us say, to the exhilarating and effervescing city of Brooklyn, must love and be silent like Cordelia, and let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on his damask cheek.

# March.

HAIL once again bluff herald of the spring!
I love the sounding of thy mighty wing;
To me there's music in thy stormy breath—
The requiem for another winter's death.

What though on earth thy front defiant lowers,
And rushing whirlwinds rock the trees and towers;
'Tis but the revel of the bold and free,
That ushers in great Nature's jubilee.

Lo, now to greet thee where the flowerets peep,
In clustered beauty from their icebound sleep;
And budding leaflets their bright tints unveil,
To deck the hills and blossom in the vale.

Thrice welcome then, stern messenger of good,
Let no tongue chide thee in thy ragged mood;
The sunbeams follow when the tempest's past,
And heaven's best gifts are borne upon the blast.

Marie Bancroft.

# Our Musical-Box.

## "THE MIKADO; OR, THE TOWN OF TITIPU."

A Japanese Opera, in Two Acts, written by W. S. Gilbert; composed by Arthur Sullivan. Produced at the Savoy Theatre, on Saturday evening, March 14, 1885.

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| Mikado of Japan... | Mr. R. Temple. | Yum-Yum ... ... | Miss Leonora Braham. |
| Nanki-Poo ... ... | Mr. Durward Lely. | Pitti-Sing ... ... | Miss Jessie Bond. |
| Ko-Ko ... ... ... | Mr. George Grossmith. | Peep-Bo ... ... ... | Miss Sybil Grey. |
| Pooh-Bah ... ... | Mr. Rutland Barrington. | Katisha ... ... ... | Miss Rosina Brandram. |
| Pish-Tush ... ... | Mr. Frederick Bovill. | | |

WHEN Mr. Gilbert, some months ago, being at that time called upon to produce an operatic novelty with the aid of his faithful *collaborateur*, Sir Arthur Sullivan, harked back to an old libretto of his own, polished and ornamented it "up to date," and brought it out on the scene of his former triumphs, a general impression prevailed to the effect that either his vein of topseyturvydom was nearly exhausted, or that he had taken cognizance of an abatement in the public relish for plots, situations and dialogues derived from the "Bab Ballads"—creations quite inimitable in their way, but depending perhaps a little too exclusively for their interest upon mere grotesqueness to exercise a more than transitory influence upon English votaries of the lyric drama. "Princess Ida," beautifully as it was set and admirably as it was performed—containing, moreover, some of the most careful and elaborate jokes ever concocted by Mr. Gilbert, as well as several of Sir Arthur Sullivan's happiest inspirations—failed to satisfy expectations based upon such brilliant precedents as "Patience" and "The Pirates of Penzance." It achieved a success, in many respects well deserved, but not of so convincing a character as to justify the belief that the public craving for ingenious paradoxes and painstaking absurdities was altogether as keen as it had most undeniably been, let us say, up to the time at which "Iolanthe" was taken off the Savoy bills. Not long after the revival of "The Sorcerer," *en attendant* the production of a brand-new Gilbertian and Sullivanesque opera, it came to be understood in musical and dramatic circles—how incorrectly events have lately proved—that Mr. Gilbert had recognized the fact that the Bab Ballad "method" of compiling operatic *libretti* was virtually "played out," and had consequently resolved to supply his fellow-worker with a "book" built upon natural lines of incident, and comparatively free from the incongruities in which he had hitherto unstintedly revelled. A wider scope was to be allotted to Sullivan's genius, theretofore circumscribed by the tortuous limits of the unnatural; he was to be allowed to deal musically with the passions and adventures of possible human beings, instead of with the weird whims of comical monsters, the creations of Mr. Gilbert's eccentric imagination. The touches of true tenderness—even of pathos—made manifest, if at rare intervals, in the lyrics of "The Pirates" and "Iolanthe" encouraged the admirers of this eminent humorist, myself among the number, to believe

that he could, if he would, emerge from his favourite upside-down realm of fancy into the domain of reality, not disdained by other gifted poets who have written for the stage, and originate a libretto not necessarily over-charged with sentimentality, but supremely sympathetic.

The *première* of the 14th ult. promptly dispelled this illusory belief, and with it the hope entertained by many of those present on that occasion, that they were about to witness the musical and dramatic results of an entirely new departure on the part of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan. "The Mikado" proved to be an extravaganza of the old Savoy type—a fabric in which familiar material has been cleverly worked up into a dainty Japanese pattern. Anachronisms, surprises, incongruities—unsparing exposure of human weaknesses and follies—things grave and even horrible invested with a ridiculous aspect—all the motives prompting our actions traced back to inexhaustible sources of selfishness and cowardice—a strange, uncanny frivolity indicated in each individual delineation of character, as though the author were bent upon subtly hinting to the audience that every one of his *dramatis personæ* is more or less intellectually deranged; these are the leading characteristics exhibited by Mr. Gilbert's latest operatic libretto in common with its predecessors. The whole action of the piece is generated by a penal code of the poet's invention, and consists in the strenuous and unremitting endeavour of all those persons immediately pledged to that code's enforcement to evade and stultify it. That their efforts to achieve this end are crowned with success, it is scarcely needful to say, nor that the contrivances by which they effect their purpose are always ingenious and frequently funny. Mr. Gilbert is a past-master in the craft of getting his puppets into and out of scrapes with an agreeable recklessness as to the ethics of their *modus operandi*. He makes them lie with a frank sprightliness irresistibly provocative of laughter; and perjury, as they perpetrate it, recommends itself to society at large as the most natural and obvious of expedients for extricating oneself from a tight place. The executioner, commanded to do the duties of his office, which he has fraudulently suffered to fall into abeyance, instantly looks about him for some innocent victim, and bribes such an one with his own betrothed bride to perish in his stead. The cumulative official, a very nonpareil of infamy, expresses his pride in his ancestry by the basest venality. The heroine, when united to the lover of her heart's choice, displays a hysterical eagerness to renounce him as soon as she understands that her marriage entails the sacrifice of her own life as well as his. Upon hearing that his son and heir has been deliberately murdered, the Mikado points out with bland geniality that such a trifling accident is really not worth making a fuss about, and turns the assassin's consternation into mirth by one or two curiously ghastly pleasantries. All these people, and the other "principals" to boot, are carefully shown to be unsusceptible of a single kindly feeling or wholesome impulse; were they not manifestly maniacal they would be demoniacal. This view of them is rendered imperative by the circumstance that their dearest personal interests are, throughout the plot, made dependent upon the infliction of a violent death upon one or other of them. Decapitation, disembowelment, immersion in

boiling oil or molten lead are the eventualities upon which their attention (and that of the audience) is kept fixed with gruesome persistence; what wonder that their brains should be unsettled by such appalling prospects, or that their hearts should be turned to stone by the petrifying instinct of self-preservation?

Having resolved to deal with the grimmest subject ever yet selected for treatment from the comic point of view by any dramatic author, and to exhibit his fellow-men to their contemporaries in the most disadvantageous light imaginable, Mr. Gilbert has done his self-appointed work with surpassing ability and inimitable *verve*. The text of "The Mikado" sparkles with countless gems of wit—brilliants of the finest water—and its author's rhyming and rhythmic gifts have never been more splendidly displayed than in some of the verses assigned to Ko-Ko, Pooh-Bah, Yum-Yum, and the Mikado himself. As for the dialogue, it is positively so full of points and hits as to keep the wits of the audience constantly on the strain, scarcely ever affording to it an instant's repose or even respite from a rapid succession of smart and pungent incitements to mirth. The bitter flavour of Mr. Gilbert's jests, and the cynical temper that makes his witticisms sting rather than tickle, certainly intensify the zest with which they are appreciated by a public which cares little at what it laughs so that it laughs. It would be easy to furbish up several fine old crusted platitudes à propos of our chief English humorist, as, for instance, that "demand creates supply," that "poets are the children of their epoch," and so forth; but I confess that I regard Mr. Gilbert as a convincing confutation of these time-worn axioms. In his case, supply has created demand; and it is he who has formed public taste in a particular direction, as it is only given to geniuses to do. Whether or not that direction be a salutary one is perhaps not very much to the purpose. He has unquestionably succeeded in imbuing society with his own quaint, scornful, inverted philosophy; and has thereby established a solid claim to rank amongst the foremost of those Latter-Day Englishmen who have exercised a distinct psychical influence upon their cotemporaries. Space considerations preclude me from quoting even a few of the admirable verses and excellent jokes that abound in Mr. Gilbert's latest work, a careful study of which cannot fail to furnish infinite entertainment to the readers of The Theatre, who, I doubt not, will one and all take an early opportunity of witnessing a performance of "The Mikado" at the Savoy Theatre. I cannot too earnestly recommend them to do so.

Of that performance everybody who was present at the production of the new opera will assuredly speak in terms of unqualified approbation. Before attempting, however, to do it justice, I must deal far more briefly than I could desire with Sir Arthur Sullivan's share in the work that was hailed with such demonstrative enthusiasm on the occasion in question. Sullivan is every whit as genuine a humorist as Gilbert, with this difference, that the *amari aliquid* never crops up in his compositions. They are always genial, graceful, and, above all, beautiful; never more so than in the score of "The Mikado." They twinkle with kindly, sly fun; nothing in them ever grates harshly upon the ear; they are exquisitely congruous to the

sentiments or situations which they profess to musically depict or reflect. What a graphic and fertile melodist is Sullivan! What an accomplished orchestrator! How complete are his knowledge and mastery of instrumental resources! Of what other composer of our time can it with truth be said that he is inexhaustible alike in invention and contrivance? This is the ninth of his operas, written in conjunction with Gilbert; and I, for my part, should be greatly embarrassed to award the palm to any one of them in particular, so excellent are they all. The best proof, indeed, of the equality of their merits is the fact that no two musicians are agreed as to which is really the best of them. Beyond a doubt "The Mikado" is as good as any of its forerunners. It contains half a dozen numbers, each of which is sufficiently attractive to ensure the opera's popularity; musical jewels of great price, all aglow with the lustre of a pure and luminous genius. Amongst these is a madrigal of extraordinary beauty, written in the fine old scholarly English fashion that comes to Sullivan as easily nowadays as it came of yore to Wilbye and Battishill. "Hearts do not break," a contralto song, which elicited a storm of applause from as critical an audience as could well be assembled within the walls of a London theatre, is Handelian in its breadth, and Schumannesque in its passionate force. The duet between Yum-Yum and Nanki-Poo, "Were I not to Ko-Ko plighted" (act i.) is simply charming. There is no prettier number in the opera than this; but the great success of the evening, as far as reiterate and rapturous recalls were concerned, at least, was the trio and chorus, "Three little maids from school" (act i.), which the first-nighters insisted upon hearing three times, and would gladly have listened to a fourth, had not their request been steadfastly declined. Nothing fresher, gayer, or more captivating has ever bid for public favour than this delightful composition.

The stars of the Savoy company sustained their well-merited reputations magnificently in the more than usually difficult parts assigned to them, and two new recruits proved themselves worthy of association with artists whose names are permanently identified with the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan. Miss Braham, as Yum-Yum, sang and acted to perfection. Although heavily handicapped, with respect to her appearance, by costumes singularly adverse to the display of feminine charms (as, indeed, were all the ladies engaged in the piece), she was more fascinating than ever, and more than once saved the action from dragging by her unaffected vivacity and winsome playfulness. Cast for the ungrateful rôle of an ugly cantankerous old maid (Katisha), Miss Rosina Brandram succeeded in investing her part with a strong dramatic interest; her singing, too, was of such excellent quality, that it constituted the most striking executant feature of the evening's performance. There are so few English contralti who combine the capacities, musical and dramatic, united in Miss Brandram's person that Mr. Carte is to be sincerely congratulated upon having secured the services of so thorough an artist. As Pitti-Sing, Miss Jessie Bond exhibited her customary archness and capacity for making the most of the opportunities afforded by a subordinate part. Her singing, in solo and concerted music alike, was quite irreproachable. Miss Sybil Grey is one of the valuable recruits above

alluded to. She has a pretty voice, her intonation is correct and her appearance attractive. Turning to the artists of the male persuasion, all of whom (supers included) looked like singular unprepossessing old women, with the solitary exception of Mr. Durward Lely in his first dress, I am bound to say that their performances, one and all, left nothing to be desired. Mr. Grossmith's part is a heavy one, but he plays it with unflagging spirit and all the humorous grotesqueness that is his speciality as actor and vocalist. The Pooh-Bah of Mr. Barrington is a masterpiece of pompous stolidity—nothing could possibly be better of its kind—and this popular comedian provided his many admirers with an agreeable surprise by singing every note of the music allotted to him perfectly in tune. Mr. Temple's impersonation of the easy-going Mikado is charmingly genial and quaint. One of the funniest songs in the opera is confided to him, and he does it ample justice. Mr. Bovill (the other recruit) proved an excellent representative of the "general utility" noble Lord, Pish-Tush. This gentleman possesses a fine mellow voice, which he produces very agreeably, and is in all respects an acquisition to the Savoy company. The chorus singers of both sexes deserve unqualified praise. It is only in London that one hears such tuneful and intelligent part-singing in connection with comic opera. It is perhaps supererogatory to add that the orchestra, under Sir Arthur Sullivan's unequalled conducting, discharged its difficult functions—for "The Mikado" score is an unusually intricate one—to the perfect satisfaction of every musician in the house.

With respect to the scenery, I can only say that the two sets by Hawes Craven will linger long in my memory as the prettiest pictures my eyes have beheld for many a day. Japanese towns must be delightful places to live in if they resemble their counterfeit presentments at the Savoy. The dresses are gorgeous, correct, and so far picturesque that they glow with rich colours, harmoniously combined. But they are unbecoming to men and women alike—especially to the latter, whom they convert for the nonce into shapeless nondescripts. In fact, they obliterate the natural distinctions between the sexes, imparting to the prettiest girl's figure the seeming of a bolster loosely wrapped up in a dressing-gown. Love or hate in connection with an object so ungraceful as any one of these imitation Japanese, appear to be uncalled for and out of place. A word of hearty recognition, however, is justly due to Mr. D'Oyly Carte for the liberality and good taste he has displayed in mounting "The Mikado," as well as for the perfection of his stage-management. The Savoy is entitled to inscribe another "great go" on its long list of brilliant successes.

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

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Concerts were numerous and of fair average quality throughout the past month. Perhaps their most interesting feature was the reappearance at two of them of Minnie Hauk (Madame Ernest de Wartegg), who paid a brief visit to London before betaking herself to Berlin, there to fulfil a lucrative engagement at the Royal Opera House. She has just bought a small estate with an old-fashioned castle upon it, near Basle, in Switzerland. The place is picturesquely situated, commanding a view of the

Rhine, and surrounded by trees. When the gifted American prima-donna retires from the stage, a few years hence, her husband means to give up exploring Africa and other out-of-the-way countries, and they will both settle down for the rest of their lives in their Swiss frontier *Burg*—Kleeburg, it is called; but, in my opinion, they might appropriately rechristen it "The Hawk's Nest." Meanwhile, Madame de Wartegg has her hands full of engagements, present and prospective, and is singing as beautifully as ever. Her provincial tour has proved a series of triumphs; and on the two occasions of her appearance here, she fairly took both her audiences by storm, so fresh and pure was her voice and so admirable her vocalization. At the Philharmonic Concert she sang the grand air allotted to Katherine in the last act of "The Taming of the Shrew," and the principal *scena* in "La Reine de Saba." On St. Patrick's Day she figured prominently in the Irish Festival given at the Albert Hall—a somewhat tame entertainment on the whole—and obtained a double encore, that would not be denied, by her fascinating delivery of a pretty little melody by J. Sachs, hight, "A Birthday Song." By the way, at this Milesian celebration, Madame Patey sang "The Meeting of the Waters" to absolute perfection. We have only had one contralto in my day who could give such a fine rendering of that beautiful ballad as Madame Patey's—poor Charlotte Dolby, never to be sufficiently lamented. Signor Foli, too, made more than one strenuous and successful effort to raise the spirits of a somewhat too placid audience by his lively renderings of lyrics in which such words as "gramachree," "slainte," "cruiskeen," and "geal," occur with agreeable frequency. What they mean I have not the faintest idea; but Signor Foli seems quite at home amongst them, and could scarcely pronounce them more trippingly were they his native Italian. Honourable mention is due to Madame Agnes Ross (why Madame?) for her excellent singing of certain mildly dialectic Irish songs. But for the Continental prefix to her name nobody who listened to her on the 17th of March could possibly have taken her for a foreigner. As a specific for depressing an enemy's spirits, or sending him to sleep at what Prince Von Bismarck calls "the psychological moment," I can confidently recommend Mr. Gauntlett's war hymn. It is an infallible soporific.

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Messrs. Isidore de Lara and Henri Logé gave the second of their "cyklus" of concerts at Prince's Hall last month before an audience as musical as it was fashionable, which is really saying a good deal, considering the number of patrician dames and damsels who invariably throng any apartment, public or private, in which De Lara's admirable singing may be heard. On the occasion in question new compositions by both the concert-givers were produced for the first time in public, and with marked success. Another interesting event in the concert line of entertainment was Herr Emil Mahr's Violin Recital at the Steinway Hall (March 16), in which the *bénéficiaire* was assisted by several competent artists, amongst them Frau Sophie Loewe, whose rendering of two Lieder by Brahms was a highly finished performance. Herr Mahr is a tuneful and expressive player, with great command of *technique* and a fine broad tone. His

paraphrase of the "Charfreitags-Zauber" from "Parsifal" exacts more from the violin than that instrument is capable of yielding; but it is extremely clever, and does him great credit, alike as musician and executant. He played Spohr's difficult Eighth Concerto, otherwise styled "La Scena Cantante," with remarkable skill and good taste, and made a decided hit with Schumacher's feathery "Elfentanz." Two young ladies of considerable promise, whom I then heard for the first time, took part in Herr Mahr's concert—viz., Miss A. Jenoure and Miss Lena Little; and Herr Carl Weber "presided" very efficiently at the piano.

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Amongst the new vocal music that came under my notice during the past month, were three English ballads of a quality so far superior to the average compositions of that class with which society is deluged, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of according to them the tribute of hearty praise they so thoroughly deserve. Let me confess that they took me by surprise, as the name of their composer, Gerard F. Cobb, was absolutely unknown to me, and I am seldom sanguine about the merits of songs to which an unfamiliar name is appended—especially when, as in the case of these ballads, they happen to be re-settings of words that have already been dealt with in a satisfactory manner by experienced and popular musicians. But, on trying over Mr. Cobb's three songs, I found that his musical versions of "Ah! County Guy," "A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sail," and "She is not Fair to Outward View," were—more particularly the two former—far superior to any that had preceded them. Mr. Cobb has the gift of creating original and beautiful melodies; but he is also an accomplished harmonist, and I should say, judging by the scholarly accompaniment (suggesting what is technically called a "clinging touch") of "County Guy," a skilled organist to boot. This latter is indeed a lovely and most tender composition. In "A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sail," a pedal point runs uninterruptedly through, or rather sustains, the whole accompaniment, and by an ingenious variety of treatment in each of the three verses, Mr. Cobb has contrived to avoid the least semblance of monotony, although his melody is as simple as it is catching. This song, easy to sing and as fresh as a light sea-breeze, ought to become exceptionally popular. "She is not Fair" is a thought more conventional than either of its companion ballads; but recommends itself to the drawing-room vocalist by sweet natural tunefulness, and the extreme suitability of the melody to Coleridge's graceful verses. With genuine gratification I recognize in Mr. Cobb a song-writer from whom much that is good and valuable may justly be expected—"that which he has done being earnest of the things that he shall do."

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During the third week of March I heard from Madame Adelina Patti, who had arrived, towards the end of February, in San Francisco, her health in general, and the state of her voice in particular, being everything that her innumerable friends and admirers could wish. She was received with great enthusiasm in the City of the Golden Gate, and, on arriving at her hotel (the "Palace"), found the suite of rooms engaged on her behalf

decorated so profusely with flowers, that it was with difficulty she "picked her way" through those beautiful tokens of esteem to greet her friends, and receive their expressions of delight at her return to the scene of her former triumphs. She sent me a long and humorous description of a sale of places that took place at the San Francisco Opera House on February 23, in the course of which 20,000 dollars were paid by bidders of all sorts and conditions for the privilege of selecting seats during the series of performance in which she is to take part. Every one of the 1,600 numbered seats was sold at a large premium, and the fortunate purchasers, in many cases, resold their acquisitions at "great advances" before leaving the house. I am sorry to say that Madame Patti's communication left me in ignorance as to our prospects of seeing and hearing her in this metropolis during the coming season. It is, however, good to know, on her own authority, that she is well, happy, and making "heaps of money."

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Colonel Henry Mapleson, the Younger, and some other gentlemen well known in the London musical circles, have started an enterprise under the title of "The Musical Exchange," having for its object the transaction of all manner of business connected with music and the drama in Europe, America, and the Colonies. This institution proposes to promote "international artistic intercourse," with a view to securing the protection of copyright; to introduce vocalists and instrumentalists to managers and impresarii; to negotiate "artistic engagements;" to organize operatic, dramatic, and concert companies, and to manage such companies "responsibly," which, I presume, means with the support of a large balance at the Exchange's bankers; conducting artistic tours of all sorts within the limits of these islands and in English-speaking "parts beyond the seas," as well as carrying on negotiations with composers and authors for the sale, purchase, and production of all musical and dramatic copyrights. This will be a comprehensive and useful undertaking indeed, if it carry out even half of its programme. Meanwhile the directors, who are certainly men of no small experience in transactions of the several varieties indicated above, are about to open subscription rooms in Bond Street, offering "the comforts and conveniences of a club," and constituting "a recognized commercial and social rendezvous" for professional musicians, *omnium generum*, provided with polyglot attendants to meet the requirements of foreign artists and managers unacquainted with "English as She is Spoke," who will moreover be supplied with newspapers, musical and otherwise, in every continental language. The prospectus forwarded to me states that the Musical Exchange will be available every day in the year, an announcement that opens up a bright vista of hope to innumerable aliens of the musical persuasion who have hitherto found it somewhat difficult to pass their time agreeably, or even rationally, on wet Sundays in London. I suppose the Exchange will fit up a smoking room *à leur intention;* such a consummation, at any rate, is devoutly to be wished. It is not known—at least to me—when the new institution will open its doors and invite subscriptions; but I understand that all its shares have been taken up by the directors, who will farm it for their own account.

The result of Messrs. Boosey's attempt to dispose of the copyrights of "Savonarola" and "The Canterbury Pilgrims" proved to be what had been generally expected by the musical profession. Only one bid of five pounds was made, and the original purchasers of the above works have consequently retained possession of them. I find, greatly to my regret, that in a former number of The Theatre I unwittingly understated the number of performances given by the Carl Rosa Company of Mr. Villiers Stanford's comic opera. At the time I wrote on the subject in question I was under the impression that "The Canterbury Pilgrims" had only been performed twice at Drury Lane, and that Mr. Rosa had eliminated it definitely from his répertoire after its second representation, finding that it did not draw with a vigour that realized his expectations. Information, in the correctness of which I have reason to believe, has, however, lately reached me to the effect that the work alluded to was given four times within a fortnight at Drury Lane, and has subsequently been performed by Mr. Rosa's company at Birmingham, Dublin, Leeds, Manchester, and Liverpool; with what success I am unable to say. I do not admire Mr. Stanford's share in "The Canterbury Pilgrims," but nothing could possibly be farther from my intention or wish than to abate by one jot the measure of publicity which that work has enjoyed or will enjoy. It would appear also that an inaccuracy has crept into the remarks I made last month with respect to the litigation that took place last year between Mr. Stanford and Messrs. Boosey. There were two actions, I am assured—not one, as I believed—and that Messrs. Boosey had to pay the costs in both. This firm has certainly no reason to congratulate itself upon the remunerative character of its business transactions with Mr. Villiers Stanford. Messrs. Boosey have paid very dearly for a spirited but unfortunate speculation which every English musician had good reason to wish might turn out successfully; for, in that case, it would have constituted a magnificent precedent, in the matter of price, for native operatic composers. It is by these latter—prospectively of course—that Messrs. Boosey's heavy losses will be felt, in all probability more poignantly than by the wealthy publishers themselves. The misfortune that has befallen them is chiefly to be regretted because it may cause other great publishing firms to look askance, for some time to come, at the scores of such English operas as may be offered to them for purchase.

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

# Our Play-Box.

## "JUNIUS; OR, THE HOUSEHOLD GODS."

A New Play, in Five Acts, by the late Lord Lytton.
Produced at the Princess's Theatre, on Thursday, February 26, 1885.

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| Lucius Junius ... ... | Mr. Wilson Barrett. | Casca ... ... ... | Mr. Walter Speakman. |
| Lucretia ... ... ... | Miss Eastlake. | Vindex ... ... ... | Mr. Charles Hudson. |
| Sextus Tarquin ... ... | Mr. E. S. Willard. | Sophronion ... ... | Mr. John Dewhurst. |
| Aruns Tarquin ... ... | Mr. Neville Doone. | Lucretius ... ... | Mr. Clifford Cooper. |
| Valerius... ... ... ... | Mr. H. Evans. | Collatinus ... ... | Mr. Bernard Gould. |
| Papinius ... ... ... | Mr. C. Fulton. | Slave to Lucretia... | Mr. W. A. Elliot. |
| Titus ... ... ... ... | Mr. H. Besley. | Female Slave ... | Miss Mary Dickens. |
| Lucius ... ... ... ... | Mr. C. Burleigh. | The Sibyl ... ... | Miss M. Leighton. |

WE can all be wise after the event. Now that "Junius" has been withdrawn after a run of less than thirty nights, reasons for the failure of the play are readily contributed from all quarters. Its story was too repulsive for one body of playgoers: it was too familiar for the general public. The play was too dull, it lacked humour and variety, or was insufficient in some other quality necessary for success. Let it be granted that the tale of the foul crime practised on Lucrece was not rendered in the most delicate manner by the dramatist; let it be admitted that the play was not sufficiently bright to attract the multitude, and let all strictures on its theatrical effectiveness be allowed to pass unchallenged. But, on the other hand, it may be contended that the play did not get a fair hearing. Produced in mid-Lent, in a season of financial depression, with the nation excited and its feelings carried away by far more important matters than those of the theatre, the play required every possible aid to obtain for it popular appreciation. Not that a great play, finely acted, would not have been carried to success despite such surroundings as harassed Lord Lytton's posthumous tragedy, but the work in question does not deserve to be called great, nor was it represented in the best possible manner. Whatever its faults—and they were many—it was a work which at least called for special support and earnest encouragement. Instead of this, it was received by a powerful press with scorn, contempt, and all uncharitableness. One or two writers ventured to do their best for a play of purpose, passion, and poetry. They were met by sneers and contumely, chaffed as fools, or upbraided as sycophants. To allude to the poetry of the drama was a weakness which met with the concise but not very convincing reply of "Rot!" I have yet to learn that an honest endeavour to support serious work is a rotten and sycophantic effort, despite the sneers of these captious critics and the jibes of these scurrilous scribes. To those writers who, possessing within themselves no power of appreciating lofty and ambitious efforts, make bold their insufficiency at the expense of those who possess a faculty denied themselves, I would commend a quotation from Roscommon:—

> "You must not think that a satiric style
> Allows of scandalous and brutish words;
> The better sort abhor scurrility."

There is no need to discuss the merits of a play which, in all probability, will never be seen again upon the London stage, or to dwell further upon a work that was literally hounded to its death. Mr. Wilson Barrett produced the drama in the best manner possible within his means. It was handsomely mounted and dressed, and few grander pictures have been seen upon the stage than that of the last act depicting the fall of Tarquin. But the acting, it must be confessed, fell short. Mr. Barrett's resources as an actor were not called into great prominence by the part of Lucius Junius Brutus. It was a part calling for little acting, but Mr. Barrett helped the play at several important moments by his firmness, his power, and his determination. The most trying rôle fell to Mr. E. S. Willard, who, as Sextus Tarquin, gave a highly intelligent, consistent, and able rendering of an extremely difficult character. Miss Eastlake made a vast advance upon her previous performances, and convincingly proved that she had completely conquered, by her earnestness and determination, those mannerisms that had so frequently injured her best efforts. Her description of the outrage—a dangerous passage for any actress—was quite admirable. Miss M. Leighton was impressive as the weird prophetess; and Mr. Walter Speakman gave a manly and earnest rendering of the character of Casca, the captain of the Roman guard: it was a sound and honest bit of acting. Of the remaining performers I prefer not to speak.

On Thursday, April 2, that excellent drama, "The Silver King," will be revived at the Princess's Theatre. After it has had its day, it will be succeeded by revivals of other pieces in the Princess's repertory, and then will come the production of a new play, written by Mr. Henry A. Jones and Mr. Wilson Barrett. While "The Silver King" is running it will be accompanied by a one-act domestic drama that was brought out on the first night of "Junius." It should be seen by all who care for a sound and workmanlike play which tells a touching story. It is entitled, "The Colour Sergeant," and it comes from the pen of an able young writer, Mr. Brandon Thomas. Besides being a clever and interesting little piece, it affords that clever comedian, Mr. George Barrett, an excellent opportunity for the display of his abilities.

Austin Brereton.

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## "MASK AND FACES."

An Original Comedy, in Three Acts, by Charles Reade and Tom Taylor.
Revived at the Haymarket Theatre, on Saturday, February 28, 1885.

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| Sir Charles Pomander | Mr. Forbes-Robertson. | James Burdock ... ... | Mr. Perceval Clark. |
| Ernest Vane ... ... | Mr. Maurice Barrymore. | Colander ... ... ... | Mr. C. Eaton. |
| James Quin ... ... | Mr. E. Maurice. | Hundsdon ... ... ... | Mr. York. |
| Colley Cibber ... ... | Mr. C. Brookfield. | Peg Woffington ... ... | Mrs. Bancroft. |
| Mr. Soaper ... ... | Mr. F. Wyatt. | Mabel Vane ... ... | Miss Calhoun. |
| Mr. Snarl ... ... ... | Mr. H. Kemble. | Kitty Clive ... ... | Miss Maud Williamson. |
| Triplet ... ... ... | Mr. Bancroft. | Mrs. Triplet ... ... | Miss M. Johnstone. |
| Lysimachus ... ... | Miss Kate Grattan. | Roxalana ... ... ... | Miss Mabel Grattan. |

"Masks and Faces," now revived by Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft for the last times under their management, was first produced at the Haymarket Theatre on Saturday, November 20, 1852, when the late Benjamin Webster was the lessee of the house. Mrs. Stirling was the original repre-

sentative of Peg Woffington in Messrs. Charles Reade and Tom Taylor's play, and Leigh Murray, who was equally at home as the lover of light comedy or the more serious lover of drama, was Sir Charles Pomander. The accomplished lessee was the first representative of Triplet. The next important occasion on which the piece saw the light was at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, in November, 1875, with Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft respectively as Triplet and Peg Woffington, Mr. Coghlan as Sir Charles Pomander, Mr. Frank Archer as Ernest Vane, and Miss Ellen Terry as Mabel Vane. Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft revived the comedy again at the Haymarket Theatre on February 5, 1881, themselves reappearing in the characters they undertook in 1875, Mr. H. B. Conway acting Sir Charles Pomander, Mr. Arthur Dacre playing Ernest Vane, Mr. Arthur Cecil representing Colley Cibber, and Miss Marion Terry following her sister as Mabel Vane.

In the present revival we cannot but feel sorrow when we read the words in the bills, "for the last times," for, judging from Mrs. Bancroft's acting of Peg Woffington, there seems no reason why such a favourite actress should not delight us for many years to come. Her laugh is as light, her pathos as affecting, and her exquisite little touches of art as happily rendered as ever. In the scene at Triplet's home many are moved to tears, to be the next moment dried by the sunny brightness of her laughing sallies; but all things must have an end, and in the future Mrs. Bancroft's Peg Woffington will be a happy and an ever-pleasant memory. Mr. Bancroft, too, will always be remembered as one of the best Triplets, if only from the amount of feeling he has been able to throw into a character so at variance with those with which his name is associated. Through all the garb of poverty and the struggles to appear cheerful in the midst of all his woes, there shines the gentleman at heart—the noble though unfortunate poet, painter, and playwright.

Miss Calhoun plays the part of Mabel Vane with infinite feeling; her appeal to the woman who has stolen her husband's heart is charmingly made, and is only equalled by the naturalness of the country lady's manner when she first meets her husband's guests. Sir Charles Pomander finds an excellent representative in Mr. Forbes-Robertson; the heartless libertine is perhaps a little too apparent, but the exquisite and the man of the world are true to nature. Mr. C. Brookfield has thoroughly hit the character of the old but still gallant Colley Cibber. Ernest Vane is hardly done full justice to by Mr. Maurice Barrymore, but he looks handsome and is easy, and at times warms to passion. Mr. Kemble is hardly bitter enough as Snarl; his speeches are more pettish than biting. Mr. E. Maurice realizes our conception of the gluttonous *bon-vivant* and captious Quin. Mr. F. Wyatt is certainly not seen at his best as Soaper; he is not a sycophant, so his flattery is too apparent to deceive any one. "Masks and Faces" is, as usual with all the productions at the Haymarket, artistically correct in costume, and the scene representing Mr. Vane's house in Queen Square is a very handsome one, the question being whether it is not almost too rich even for a wealthy country squire's house.

## "THE HOUSE ON THE MARSH."

An Original Drama, in Four Acts, by Miss Florence Warden. First performed at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, on Monday, March 2.

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| Gervase Rayner... ... | Mr. Pascoe Bioletti. | Mrs. Rayner ... | Miss Gertrude Warden. |
| Lawrence Reade ... | Mr. George E. James. | Haidee Rayner ... | Miss Mabel Hardinge. |
| Stanley Herbert ... ... | Mr. Cecil Crofton. | Jane ... ... ... | Miss Lena Chesterfield. |
| Maynard ... ... ... | Mr. W. E. Richardson. | Violet Christie ... | Miss Florence Warden. |
| Sarah Gooch ... ... | Miss Ada Murray. | | |

I am at some disadvantage in discussing this play, as I believe that since I saw it, on the second night after its production, it has undergone several modifications. The scene of the first act, I understand, is now laid outside, instead of inside, the House on the Marsh, and I hear of the introduction of an entirely new character, in addition to six minor rôles not included above. Possibly, therefore, it is now explained how Violet Christie succeeds in rebutting the charge of robbery which is preferred against her; and, possibly, the third act concludes in a less melodramatic manner than it did on the night of my visit. The chief impression that I then received was, that the acts were not so closely connected as they should have been; that the incidents did not dovetail sufficiently into one another; and that there was a good deal which ought to have been made clearer. Apart from that, there was much to praise; for the original story had been very intelligently treated, the fresh details were ingenious at least, and the dialogue throughout was crisp and to the purpose. Much depends, of course, upon the standpoint from which the drama is regarded. The hero is a county justice of the peace, who makes his income, apparently, out of jewel robberies. The heroine is a young lady, presumably intelligent, who, during four long acts, steadily refuses to see and acknowledge what is going on before her eyes. Refuse to accept these characters as probable, and the piece becomes a tissue of absurdity. Assume, on the other hand, that there are such men as Rayner and such girls as Violet, and the play can be witnessed with a certain amount of pleasure, unaffected by the occasional reminiscences aroused. Miss Florence Warden performs the part of Violet with ease of manner and naturalness of tone; and she is well supported by Mr. Pascoe Bioletti, Miss Ada Murray, and Miss Gertrude Warden.

W. Davenport Adams.

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## "THE MAGISTRATE."

An Original Farce, in Three Acts, by A. W. Pinero.
Produced at the Court Theatre, on Saturday, March 21, 1885.

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| Mr. Posket ... ... ... | Mr. Arthur Cecil. | Inspector Messiter ... ... | Mr. Albert Sims. |
| Mr. Bullamy ... ... ... | Mr. Fred Cape. | Sergeant Lugg ... ... ... | Mr. Lugg. |
| Colonel Lukyn... ... ... | Mr. John Clayton. | Constable Harris ... ... | Mr. Burnley. |
| Captain Horace Vale ... | Mr. F. Kerr. | Wyke ... ... ... ... ... | Mr. Fayre. |
| Cis Farringdon... ... ... | Mr. H. Eversfield. | Agatha Posket ... ... ... | Mrs. John Wood. |
| Achille Blond ... ... ... | Mr. Chevalier. | Charlotte ... ... ... ... | Miss Marion Terry. |
| Isidore.. ... ... ... ... | Mr. Deane. | Beatie Tomlinson ... ... | Miss Norreys. |
| Mr. Wormington ... ... | Mr. Gilbert Trent. | Popham ... ... ... ... | Miss La Coste. |

Despite their efforts to provide good entertainment at the Court Theatre, Messrs. Clayton and Cecil have not in the near past been fortunate enough to always hit the public taste. The comedies they have produced have been

more than fairly good—well acted and well staged—and yet they did not hold their own for long. It is therefore the greater pleasure to congratulate them on having at length, in striking out quite a new line, secured a work which from all appearances may have an almost unlimited run. "The Magistrate," Mr. A. W. Pinero's original farce in three acts, is brimful of good honest fun, with all the briskness of the Palais-Royal pieces without any of their objectionable features; and though the motive is not strong, it is so well elaborated, the dialogue is so smart, and every opportunity capable of producing laughter is so well treated that the farce proves to become one of the most amusing productions that the English stage has seen for some time.

Mrs. Posket, with the not unusual objection that ladies have to letting their actual age be known, has married Mr. Posket, an exemplarily mild and philanthropic magistrate, and led him to believe that she is five years younger than she really is. To carry out this story she has represented Cis Farringdon, her son by a former marriage, as being only fourteen instead of nineteen. The young gentleman is precocious even beyond his real number of years, but being dressed by his mother as an Eton boy, is petted by the ladies and treated only as a child. He, however, indulges in all the pleasures of a young man—has a room at the Hôtel des Princes, where he gives suppers and generally runs riot. To this hotel he induces Posket, his respected stepfather, to come one evening and sup with him. On the same evening Mrs. Posket has learned that Colonel Lukyn, an old friend of her husband's and her boy's godfather, has been asked to dine at her house. With the view of begging him not to divulge the secret of her son's age, she goes to his lodgings with her sister, but finding he has gone to the Hôtel des Princes, follows him there. Colonel Lukyn is going to sup with a friend, Captain Vale, engaged to Charlotte, Mrs. Posket's sister. He hears her story and promises not to betray her, offers them refreshment, but they stay so long that the landlord announces that the police are at the door, intending to search the house to see if there are any visitors in it after prohibited hours, and that all must hide. The lights are put out. Mrs. Posket gets under the table, and is soon joined there by her husband, who unwittingly has crept to the same place of refuge in endeavouring to escape from the next room. The police enter, and discover the concealed ones, with the exception of Posket, who has in the confusion been dragged out on to a balcony by Cis, and, crashing through a skylight, these two escape. The Colonel, objecting to the ladies not being allowed to go free after giving their addresses, commits an assault on the police, and so they are all locked up. The next morning they have to appear at Mulberry Police Court before Mr. Posket, who, having been chased all night by the officers of the law, is in a terrible plight, and, in his nervous state of mind, sentences the party to "seven days." In the last act, at Posket's house, a brother magistrate manages to set matters straight by having re-heard the case and upset the conviction, on the plea that the prisoners were all guests of the precocious youth who is to be shipped off to Canada as soon as he is of age and has married a *protégée* of his stepfather's, to whom, as well as to the cook, he has been making fierce love. Mr. Arthur Cecil, as the innocent magistrate,

who is taught the mysteries of a game of cards, called "Fireworks," by the hopeful Cis Farringdon, was the very perfection of the character. His description of the night's horrors when being chased by the police was inimitable in its mock tragic description. Mrs. John Wood played the deceiving and indignant wife in her usual laughter-provoking manner, and fairly convulsed the house. Mr. John Clayton adopted quite a new line as the retired 'bluff' and yet sententious Colonel Lukyn. His make-up was excellent, and his acting replete with clever touches. Miss Marion Terry made much of the small part of Charlotte Verrinder. Her love scenes with Captain Horace Vale (a thorough "heavy swell," most naturally rendered by Mr. F. Kerr) were full of humour. In Cis Farringdon, Mr. H. Eversfield had another of those boyish parts in which he is so excellent. Mr. Gilbert Trent was good as the Chief Clerk; Miss Norreys was naïve as Beatie Tomlinson; and the smaller parts of Sergeant Lugg, of the police; Achille Blond, the hotel proprietor; and Isidore, the waiter, were done full justice to by Messrs. Lugg, Chevalier, and Deane. Miss La Coste realized the idea of the love-lorn servant. All did their best to make the piece the success it undoubtedly was, and Mr. Pinero was fully warranted in responding to the unanimous call for the author on the first night.

# Our Omnibus-Box.

A CORRESPONDENT has taken up the cudgels in defence of the character of Laertes as described by Mr. Burnand in the "Theatre Annual":—

In taking up the cudgels to defend, however feebly, the character of the man on whom Mr. Burnand has chosen to throw such reckless and cruel aspersions in the Christmas number of the Theatre, I may venture to assert at the outset that with him "I do go in for being a common-senser," and draw my inferences of a character from its words and actions as given us by the author, rather than from any process of exegetical reasoning, based, however subtly, on generalizations of actual life. In analyzing the creation of a play-writer, critics occasionally are apt to neglect the indications or outlines given by him, and to base their reading of the character on the behaviour of a typical mortal when placed in similar situations, thus offering to the reader a certain line of action adapted from their own experiences of human nature, rather than from those of the author. In this respect, apparently, Mr. Burnand has, with the best of intention, somewhat erred; he has allowed his fertile imagination, in some instances, to stray beyond the limits assigned by the author. Granted that in many cases the character of a play is presented in the roughest outline, which it is the province of the artist to fill in with his own idiosyncrasies and his own personality, yet, nevertheless, the true artist will never violate the outline given

by touches, which are at variance with what is evidently the spirit of the author.

We first meet with a series of assumptions, ingenious, no doubt, but nevertheless unwarranted by the text. "Laertes has been badly brought up. He has never known a mother's care. He has been neglected by his time-serving, place-seeking father, and spoilt by his weak-minded, vain, and far too knowing sister, Ophelia." If these assumptions are not borne out by the text, yet at the same time, if they harmonize with the spirit of it, they are logically tenable. But, from a passage in act i. sc. 2, it may be inferred that Polonius, if he was speaking the truth, did not habitually neglect his son, but, on the other hand, was so fond of him, that the king asks, half in surprise, if Laertes has his father's permission to return to college, and the old man reluctantly replies, "He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave, by laboursome petition; and, at last, upon his will, I sealed my hard consent." And in what way was he spoiled by Ophelia? Ophelia's pliant and affectionate nature was such, that her love was lavished on her wild headstrong brother, yet that brother gives no indication of the petulance of the spoiled child. His "dilatoryness" in leaving home is simply the result of his affection for his sister and father, and his parting admonitions, and farewell, breathe only an anxious solicitude for his sister's welfare, and the quiet and respectful spirit in which his father's precepts are assimilated. Again, because Laertes is going to Paris to complete his education and perfect himself in the higher branches of music and fencing, it does not follow that he is "a rough and rude sort of a chap at home," &c., but rather the reverse, for a boy who voluntarily returns to his education, a boy who is already proficient in some branches of study, and is anxious to pursue them further, in spite of the attractions of Court life, has apparently got beyond the native savageness inherent in boys, and is showing an appreciation for higher things.

"Laertes hasn't a good word to say of his patron the Prince behind his back; he is disloyal; he is a scandal-monger." Yet, by Hamlet's behaviour is it apparent that this fraternal warning was uncalled for? And is it a scandal to put one's sister on her guard, by laying before her the true character of a man?

Without entering into the vexed question of Hamlet's corpulence, suffice it to note that in attempting to prove his thesis, Mr. Burnand has made a glaring perversion of the text. Instead of the mind and soul not growing wide simultaneously with the development of the body, Laertes expressly states the reverse:—

> "For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
> In thews and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,
> The inward service of the mind and soul
> Grows wide withal."

The whole tendency of his speech to his sister is, on the face of it, to put her on her guard against a man who, by his position and somewhat erratic behaviour, is unsuited to her; but why Mr. Burnand seeks a much more subtle meaning, and regards it as "an incentive to crime, a premium on dishonesty," "a road to licentiousness," and "a market price on dishonour,"

is inexplicable to me, save on the hypothesis that it helps to strengthen his preconceived notion of the character.

Again, are we to gather from Polonius's address to his son that the precepts and general good advice he offers are rendered necessary in consequence of Laertes' misdoings? Surely not; the advice which the father gives to his son is, in effect, to set him on his guard against and open his eyes to possible indiscretions, which may in his future career tempt him. If Polonius was such a consummate old hypocrite as Mr. Burnand suggests, it is not reasonable to suppose that he would drop the mask before his Pecksniffian family, and if he was as selfish as his namesake he would hardly take the trouble to guard his son against any possible slip of behaviour which his own experience of the world might suggest. Because a parent warns his son to "beware of entrance to a quarrel," for instance, is it necessarily to be assumed that the son is quarrelsome? And, if so, are we to suppose that when in the Decalogue we are told not to murder, steal, or bear false witness, that the Commandments are addressed exclusively to habitual murderers, thieves, and liars? Without carrying the analogy further it must be apparent to the most superficial reader that the whole tenor of this speech forbids the construction which Mr. Burnand attempts to force on it; that it has the true Shakespearian ring of truth, and love, and honesty about it, and, towards the close in particular, true parental anxiety is meant, anxiety seasoned with loving confidence and hope:—

> "This above all,—to thine own self be true;
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.
> Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!"

"The next we hear of Laertes is that he is in Paris leading a very dissolute life." Turning to act ii. sc. 1, we find Polonius giving minute instructions to a confidential agent to find out as quietly as possible the sort of life Laertes is living before giving him certain presents. No indication is given that he "is compelled to 'stump up,'" or that Laertes is leading "a very dissolute life." The somewhat roundabout way in which the old man finds out how his son is getting on is easily explained by the fact that all his life he has been accustomed to the wiles of diplomacy and the secrets of state-craft:—

> "If circumstances lead me, I will find
> Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
> Within the centre."

And though evidently eager to hear about his son, he charges Reynaldo in his diplomatic mission to be careful of his son's honour:—

> "And there put on him
> What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank
> As may dishonour him; take heed of that;
> But, sir, such wanton wild, and usual slips,
> As are companions noted and most known
> To youth and liberty."

Some time, probably months, elapses, before Laertes appears on the scene once more, and then only as an avenger. And here his indignation of the secret murder and hugger-mugger interment of his father without trophy,

"There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.'

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

George Alexander

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FALK, 947, 949, AND 951, BROADWAY,
NEW YORK, U.S.A.

sword, or hatchment, with never a noble rite or formal ostentation, is only consistent with the impetuous loving character I have endeavoured to ascribe to him. No fury is apparent when he first meets his poor demented sister, but grief, and a new incentive to revenge. His love and pity for her here, and in the graveyard scene, are conspicuous in every allusion, and, as far as I can discover, there is no baseness in his motive. Silence about his father's death is maintained in order that he may the easier kill the murderer. Instead of his rage being "all a sham and a bid for popularity," on the contrary, it so perverts his mind that he consents to any underhand method whereby he may attain his object. His bearing in the fencing scene right through, until its disastrous conclusion, is manly; there is nothing of the ruffian in his manner of death, he confesses that he is justly killed with his own treachery; evidently repents the evil thought which prompted its commission; tells Hamlet the truth; and, asking his forgiveness, dies with forgiveness on his lips.

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Mr. George Alexander, whose portrait, in the character of Bassanio in "The Merchant of Venice," is given in this number, was born at Reading, on June 19, 1858, and was educated at Clifton, Stirling, and Edinburgh. Like many actors who have advanced rapidly in their profession, Mr. Alexander had a very considerable experience as an amateur. He made his first appearance on the stage at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, on September 7, 1879, in the company managed by Miss Ada Swanborough and Mr. W. H. Vernon, and played Charles in "His Last Legs," and Harry Prendergast in "The Snowball." During the same engagement Mr. Alexander acted in "Mammon," "A Lesson in Love," "Living at Ease," and other pieces; and on joining the "Caste" company he played George D'Alroy, Captain Hawtree, Lord Beaufoy, McAllister, Sydney Daryl, Colonel White in "Home," and Chudleigh Dunscombe in "M.P." His performance in the provinces of Freddy Butterscotch in "The Guv'nor" was followed by his first engagement in London, in the part of Caleb Deecie in Mr. Irving's revival of "Two Roses" at the Lyceum, where he subsequently played Paris in "Romeo and Juliet." In 1882, Mr. Alexander was engaged in the provincial tour of Mr. Clayton's company, as Claude Glynne in "The Parvenu," which he played at the Court Theatre on returning to London. In the same year he accompanied Miss Wallis in the provinces, playing Maurice de Saxe, Orlando, Benedick, Romeo, and Leonatus Posthumus in "Cymbeline." During the brief career of "Bondage" at the Opera Comique, Mr. Alexander acted Sir Gilbert Vincent, and afterwards appeared at the Adelphi and Imperial theatres as Armand Duval to Miss Lingard's Camille. In Mr. Wilkie Collins's ill-fated "Rank and Riches" the young actor was entrusted with the original part of Cassilis; and then found a more congenial atmosphere at the St. James's Theatre, where he played Victor de Riel in "Impulse," Dave Hardy in "Young Folk's Ways," and Frank in Theyre Smith's "Case for Eviction," the two latter characters being original. At this time, Mr. Alexander was chosen by Mr. Gilbert to support Miss Anderson at the Lyceum in his original part of D'Aulnay in "Comedy and Tragedy,"

but he retained his engagement at the St. James's Theatre, where he afterwards played Octave in "The Ironmaster." He was next engaged by Mr. Irving for the American tour of 1884–85, and appeared as De Mauprat in "Richelieu," on the closing night of the Lyceum season. In America, Mr. Alexander has assumed the rôles of Bassanio, Nemours, Don Pedro, Laertes, Orsino, Christian in "The Bells," Courriol in "The Lyons Mail," Adrien de Mauprat in "Richelieu," and Moray in "Charles I." During Mr. Irving's recent indisposition he acted Benedick, his impersonation winning warm encomiums from the Boston press. To this list of characters should be added those which Mr. Alexander has enacted at various matinées in London—Arncliffe in the "Unequal Match," Guiderius in "Cymbeline," De Neuville in "Plot and Passion," and Don Cæsar de Bazan.

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Our other photograph represents Miss Ada Cavendish as the heroine of Mr. Mark Quinton's drama, "In his Power," now being played at the Olympic Theatre. I regret that illness at present keeps this popular and accomplished actress out of the bill, and I heartily wish her a speedy recovery. Her part, meanwhile, is being excellently sustained by Mrs. Beerbohm-Tree.

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On February 18, Mr. John L. Child gave a matinée (by kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Lumley) at 39, Chester Terrace. Excellent fare had been provided for the numerous and appreciative audience. Mdme. Thirlemann, Miss Ehrenberg, and Mr. Isidore de Lara were the vocalists, the two latter being in especially good voice. The instrumental music was in the hands of Mr. W. L. Barrett (flute) and Mr. C. W. Bampfylde and Mr. Henri Logé (piano-forte). Mr. John L. Child repeated "The Building of S. Sophia," which he gave for the first time at his second recital at St. George's Hall: his conception of this difficult piece is excellent. "Wedding Bells" and "Enoch Arden" were equally successful; and "Mrs. Joseph Porter" called forth peals of laughter. As I have often remarked before, Mr. Child has a peculiar gift for saying Charles Dickens's prose as it ought to be said. Mr. Brandon Thomas recited "Over the Hills from the Poorhouse," and "Ferdinando and Elvira," in his own refined style; and Mr. George Grossmith gave his amusing sketch, "See me reverse." Altogether the matinée was both interesting and very successful.

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The third of the series of recitals at St. George's Hall came off on February 19, and scored for Mr. John L. Child one of his greatest successes this season. "Wedding Bells," by Charlotte Griffiths, was both impressive and pathetic; "European Guides," by Mark Twain (first time), highly finished and quaint. Then followed "The Angel's Story," delivered with tender simplicity; and (also for the first time) Tom Hood's "Demon Ship." The weird intensity of Mr. Child's treatment must have sent a perfect thrill through those of the listeners unacquainted with the poem. He gave such good effect to the climax that it was greeted with an immense burst

of applause; it was highly artistic. A selection from "Macbeth," given for the second time, occupied the second part of the programme. I reviewed this performance last year, and find the few trifling faults I took exception to have now vanished. The soprano voice for Lady Macbeth has been dispensed with, and the part, without losing any of its feminine softness, has gained much in intensity and power. Mr. Child's conception of Macbeth is excellent; the dignity of the noble Thane in the first act, followed by the abject terror, which is the outcome of his dark deed and not the innate nature of the man, are admirably portrayed. Mr. Child is a careful and earnest student of Shakespeare, and from an elocutionary point of view, the recital was also very good. Locke's music was again given, under the direction of Mr. George Calkin, and was equally successful as it was last year. Mr. Child received quite an ovation of applause, which he thoroughly deserved, for he was at his very best throughout the evening.

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Mr. John L. Child's fourth and last recital of the present series, filled St. George's Hall to overflowing on March 14. In the first part Mr. Child produced, for the first time, "A Fairy Tale for Elderly Children," by Edmund Ollier; the tale is intestering and well told both by the author and the interpreter. "The Story of the Faithful Soul," by Adelaide Proctor (first time), given with organ accompaniment, was especially well rendered. "The Dream of Eugene Aram" recited with simplicity and earnestness; but a little more rapidity in the delivery of some of the passages would have been an improvement. "Vital Spark," by Pope, is an extremely difficult piece to say, and although Mr. Child did all he could for it, does not repay the trouble. "My first and last appearance," by E. F. Turner (also first time), caused shouts of laughter, showing the reciter's comic vein to great advantage. The second part was a concert, in which the following artistes took part: Mr. F. W. Bampfylde, Mr. Edward Howell, Mr. Lance Calkin, Mr. Maybrick and Miss Fanny Moody, the two last named carrying off the honours. The young lady has a most pure and fresh voice, and sings charmingly. Mr. Maybrick's splendid voice was at its best, and his spirited singing gained him an encore. The third part was a recital in costume of the great Forum scene from the third act of Julius Cæsar, Mr. John Pullman being an efficient Brutus, and the other members of the Irving Club supplying the citizens. Although suffering from a slight hoarseness, caused no doubt by the bad fog prevalent that night, Mr. Child as Marc Antony delivered Shakespeare's admirable speech with much effect. The assumption was dignified and earnest. It is to be regretted that the treacherous weather robbed the actor's voice of some of its power. That he has added another success to his former ones is undoubted. As a closing remark, which applies to the whole series of recitals, Mr. Child deserves high commendation on one point quite apart from his natural gifts; he is an earnest student, his aim is to get at the author's true meaning, and to interpret his work with all the best resources of his own abilities. He does not follow this or that great artiste's school of acting and elocution—he is himself, and free from mannerism.

The matinée given last month at the Gaiety Theatre by Miss Minnie Bell was noticeable rather from the merits distinguishing the several impersonators of Mr. G. W. Appleton's play, entitled "A Fair Sinner," than from any dramatic power or original ideas existent in the drama itself. A young girl, whilst secretly loving her handsome and attractive cousin, Frank Coventry, is compelled through a father's monetary difficulties to accept the hand of the rich Sir Guy Walton, in order that her aged parent may be henceforth relieved from present want and future starvation. Needless to say, that Adelaide Jermyn's unsympathetic union increases rather than otherwise the amorous sentiments entertained by her towards the aforementioned cousin—a circumstance gradually awakening the jealous suspicions of Sir Guy. Matters therefore become irremediably complicated, when Kate Melville, a pretty and natural ingénue, innocently evinces for Frank Coventry a girlish admiration, which, somewhat reciprocated on the young fellow's part, arouses all the passionate love hitherto lying dormant in Lady Walton's nature. Governed by a mood of mingled scorn and affection, the reckless wife early quits the fascinations of the ball-room, so as to steal a moment's undisturbed conversation with Cousin Frank. Words follow words, and drown necessary explanations. The young man's commendable desires to hold fast to his already acknowledged engagement with Kate Melville are scorned and laughed at by his companion, when suddenly the door quickly opens, and, as is generally the case in such unfortunate predicaments, Kate and Sir Guy enter the room. Lady Walton, however, paying small heed to propriety and still less consideration for her cousin's feelings under such an adverse state of affairs, passionately clasps her arms round the poor fellow's neck, and the situation is consequently complete as regards the evidence placed before the eyes of the affianced bride of one party and the husband of the other. The way, nevertheless, by which Sir Guy decides as to whether his own or Frank's life shall prove an expiation for the above offence appears even more startling in idea. A game of écarté is proposed between the infuriated parties, the winner naturally being the one destined to kill the loser. That this duty subsequently devolves upon Frank goes almost without saying; whereupon, magnanimously refusing to do what is required of him—namely, slaughter his rival—Sir Guy takes a hunting-whip from his pocket, and has already commenced to lash it across his adversary's shoulders when Lady Walton rushes into the room. Frank, whilst struggling with Sir Guy, fires the pistol he holds, which, though refusing to go off in a right and legitimate manner at the Gaiety matinée, was presumably supposed to do so, as the man instantly drops upon the floor, amidst Lady Walton's screams and piteous entreaties. No way, therefore, is apparently left by which the latter can expiate her faults, but in taking a last farewell of this earthly life, thus yielding Kate and Frank ample opportunity for considering how their broken engagement may once again be renewed, and so the curtain falls upon the death of Lady Walton, "The Fair Sinner," surrounded by weeping friends and attendants, and happily unmolested by the scarcely desirable presence of Sir Guy. Miss Minnie Bell, as the ill-fated heroine, gave evidence of most artistic and dramatic talent, her command of pathos and

her quick changes of expression standing her in excellent stead, whilst showing that the lady's thoughts and ideas were commendably in accordance with the character she impersonated. Under such favourable auspices, we may hope at no lengthy date to see further proofs of Miss Bell's unquestionable powers and abilities. Kate Melville was likewise gracefully delineated by Miss Evelyn Benedict, a promising young actress; whilst a small character brought once again to our remembrance that clever artist, Miss Alexes Leighton, whose undoubted talents and pleasing individuality are as yet insufficiently known upon our London stage. Another excellent character sketch was also given by that promising actor, Mr. G. Giddens. This gentleman's quiet, natural humour, untainted by trace of vulgarity, was really quite admirable. Mr. Charles Macdona and Mr. J. A. Rosier showed creditable earnestness in their respective parts of Sir Guy Walton and the somewhat ruthlessly treated hero of the play, Frank Coventry.

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The collection of water-colour drawings by Frederick Walker, now being exhibited at Mr. Dunthorne's gallery, Vigo Street, awakens in our minds the universal feelings of regret consequent on the untimely demise of this young and promising artist, who, representing the simplest incidents of life with most poetic sentiment and feeling, was able to grasp from a wayside flower as from snow-clad rocks and mountains some ideas by which, through the medium of brush and canvas, the minds of others like himself might be ennobled and strengthened to wise and honourable purpose. We can scarcely, however, adequately grasp the high standard of thought exemplified to greater or less degree in the several compositions of Frederick Walker, unless lingering for a moment's space before that exquisite delineation of earthly contentment, rightly forming a marked feature in the present collection, entitled "The Harbour of Refuge." Here the artist forcibly contrasts the divergent aspects of life and death, of youthfulness and fast approaching decay. But in what a supremely natural and nobly imaginative manner! The rose-coloured gleams of the setting sun shed their light upon the quaint red-bricked almshouses, along whose old-fashioned terrace walk totters an aged woman supported by the arm of a tall, strongly built girl. The small group of people surrounding the founder's statue of this peaceful domain, the lithe figure of the mower in the immediate foreground, cutting down the white, starred-daisies, closely besprinkling the soft green sward—how all these incidents in their simple grace of thought bestow upon our minds a sense of restful satisfaction, entirely necessary as regards a right understanding of the subject. Let us now glance towards "The Old Farm Garden," with its trimly kept paths and flowery beds, o'ershadowed on one side by the drooping branches of a lilac tree, slightly shading a woman whose fingers nimbly ply an indefinable number of crossed knitting-pins, whilst a sleek black cat basks beside her in the noonday's soothing warmth and heat. But to the lovers of flowers, what stronger evidence could there be to evince the artist's joy and appreciation of the same than in this medium-sized study of country life, entitled "Lilies?" Here again is a quaint, sweet-scented garden, but what a profusion of blossoms twine and intermingle with one another

behind the low, boxtree border, as neat in appearance as is the red gravelled pathway along which a girl steps, watering-pot in hand. Upon strangely different forms and shades of colour do the bright, glistening drops fall—on the pale pink cabbage roses, old-fashioned, but very beautiful to pluck and smell, classed side by side with blood red carnations. The drooping fuchsias, white and purple, here touch the "Tom Thumb" geraniums, almost hidden in their broad fan-shaped leaves, whilst ranged above all this wealth of colour, stand the tall, stately reared lilies, yielding by their starry whiteness a somewhat mediæval aspect to the entire scene, strangely attractive in its simple, old-world grace. Such may also be affirmed regarding the study entitled "Stobhall Gardens," an olden house in Scotch baronial style of architecture. A sundial, situated on a grassy bank, forms a fitting background for a female figure, clad in reddish-brown drapery, whilst sombre green yew trees wave their branches overhead. This picture, well worthy minute inspection, must nevertheless give place to the drawing of "Marlow Ferry," a study of rare grace and most exquisite beauty. Termed by Mr. Ruskin as "marvellous," this quiet village scene assuredly exhibits to undeniable advantage the truly poetic feelings inspiring the genius of Frederick Walker. An etching of the drawing has just been completed by that eminent artist, Mr. R. W. Macbeth, and in all respects may be owned a faithful and admirable copy of the original picture.

Space and time prevent our dwelling upon the vivacity displayed in "The Street, Cookham," along whose pavement a girl drives a flock of cackling snowy-white geese; as also upon "A Fishmonger's Shop," a most praiseworthy and finished study. The astute-looking shopman, stationed behind his stall, which displays every possible kind and sort of fish—from the pickled herring to the red mullet or grey-speckled mackerel—is not less excellently depicted than are the figures and looks of the lady and boy, clad in costumes of the eighteenth century. Before closing, however, we cannot refrain mentioning "The Mushroom Gatherers," a work replete with most imaginative and realistic thought. This landscape scene, shrouded in the dim light of early morning, is as yet so enveloped by the veiling shades of night, that the pale moon, sailing amongst the lowering clouds, becomes distinctly visible to our gaze. By its flickering gleams we perceive the stooping figure of a man, basket in hand. Before and around him are clustering groups of mushrooms, appearing amidst the long grass, like innumerable stars heralding the slowly approaching dawn. Yet still further on in the dense gloom we note the sombre-clad form of a woman, presumably bent upon the same errand as her companion; but the figure is so enshrouded in the commingling darkness of earth and sky, that it rather resembles a phantom-shape than that of a human being. The picture, as may be supposed from even the above imperfect description, is weirdly imaginative; but so marvellous in idea and suggestion, that we unconsciously turn towards it again and again with admiring curiosity, difficult to appease and satisfy. The accompanying study, entitled "The Plough," is likewise worthy our consideration as regards striking effects of light and shade. The rugged cliffs, of scarcely paler red than that of the firmament, bathed in the fiery glow of the setting sun, proves a wondrously

artistic background for the white horses driven steadily across the field, encircled on one side by a glowing brooklet. It is as truly difficult to describe the contrast existent between the two last-mentioned works as easy to imagine the triumphs which would eventually have crowned Frederick Walker's genius, had he been spared for a longer time in our midst. A most pleasing though unfinished portrait of this lamented artist is appropriately included in the present exhibition.

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Looking over more than a score of so-called musical compositions, exhibiting to greater or less degree a general dearth of original and praiseworthy talent, is scarcely a task of such pleasurable occupation that we would tire in like manner the patient endurance of our readers by particularizing the obvious faults and errors of construction, which not unnaturally arouse speculations as to the profit derived from the publication of such literal "trash," yielding but little artistic or profitable enjoyment to its several purchasers and patronizers. Messrs. Stanley Lucas & Co. send us, however, an album of six songs, by E. Ford, worthy our thoughtful consideration, so pleasantly does the musician's art give voice to a well-chosen selection of Shelley's love-inspired verse. The first number, "To the Queen of my Heart!" is especially commendable for the quick, harmonic changes of chords, which lend additional weight and meaning to the poet's impassioned words. Scarcely as successful in depicting the sentiment of the following song, "Heart's Devotion," there is little if any fault to be found with the truly sympathetic treatment bestowed on those severally entitled, "On a Faded Violet," and "Good Night." The soothing strains of the first melody are really delightful, so restful appear the transitions from major to minor tones, falling upon our ears in harmonizing cadence, whose rhythmical movement, disturbed for a short space by the lover's questionings to his mistress, resumes once again the soft, sleep-conducing refrain, and so dies away into silence. We would certainly advise those appreciating somewhat higher and more ennobling work than that generally bestowed upon the ballads of modern date to purchase Mr. E. Ford's album of song. Messrs. Stanley Lucas likewise send us two sketches for the pianoforte, by G. Crowther. The first, a Rondo Scherzando. is a sufficiently attractive melody, recalling to our mind the quaint, harmonious strains usually accompanying the staid, regular movements of the time-honoured minuet. A song by F. Southgate, entitled "Why So?" has also caught in an equally pleasing manner the simple pleasantry of some words written in the year 1590, otherwise the accompaniment possesses little claim to any marked distinction. Turning our attention towards Messrs. Willcocks & Co.'s numerous publications, we would mention an elaborately worked out melody by that eminent artist, Sir Julius Benedict, entitled "A Spring Love Song." "In the Time of Roses," and "How can I Tell you so?" are, on the other hand, compositions of a melodious though somewhat commonplace order. H. W. Little's graceful setting to Edward Oxenford's sympathetic words "Alone in the World," may be commended to those not wholly unmindful of the dark and sombre aspects of daily life. Amongst the many valses sent us by the last named firm those

entitled "My Love," by Mrs. Millet, "Fleur de Noblesse," by G. Lamothe, and the "Kuntzler Träume" Waltzer by J. Lubig, are all well timed and acceptable compositions. Neither must we omit to mention the really excellent polkas by Leopold de Wenzel and E. Satias, respectively entitled "Bonhomie," and "Porte Verve." A plaintive ballad by J. Webster, "Two Lives," is likewise certain to gain favour in many drawing-room circles, and even more surely will this be the case as regards Michael Watson's song, "An Old Maid's Heart," where a simple air finishes in a pleasing waltz time refrain. "Sieg-lied," by Alice Barton, may also prove a welcome pianoforte composition to those desiring an effective piece, scarcely beyond the powers of the most ordinary executant. The last three publications are issued by the firm of Robert Cocks & Co., New Burlington Street.

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A well-known provincial critic writes :—

"Miss Achurch, who sustained a small part in 'The Queen's Favourite' when it was produced at the Olympic in 1883, and who, I believe, has had provincial experience under the auspices of Miss Génévieve Ward, has been playing in the country in a company of which Mr. Henry Dundas is the manager and leading actor. The principal rôle undertaken by her was that of Mercy Merrick in a version of 'The New Magdalen,' and the young actress displayed in it so much force and *finesse*, that great things may be hoped from her in the future. She has, of course, much to learn, but this particular performance is full of promise. Miss Achurch, I venture to prophesy, will make a name for herself by-and-by both in London and out of it."

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Madame Marie Roze's impersonation of Helen of Troy in "Mefistofele" has suggested to Mr. Davenport Adams the following lines :—

"The Grecian Helen shone, they say,
In beauty, both of form and face ;
The one, a miracle of charm,
The other, wonderful in grace.

"Our lyric Helen, happier still,
Outshines the famous fabled dame,
And, lovely both in face and voice,
Excites at once a double flame.

"Endowed with all the Grecian's spells,
She boasts another yet more dear,
And, gifted with the sirens' notes,
Delights alike the eye and ear."

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Our Melbourne correspondent, writing on January 28, says :—

There is but little to note in theatrical lines during the past four weeks. The pantomimes are in the full flush of their success, and no changes are contemplated at any of the theatres at present. "Cinderella" is drawing wonderful houses at the Theatre Royal ; the large auditorium has been crowded to excess every evening since Boxing night. I know, for a

fact, that the receipts have averaged £300 every night of its performance. The cast is one that could not and will not for many years again be equalled. The bulk of the Opera Company are included, and, in consequence, the singing, solo, concerted, and choral, is of a superior stamp to what we are usually accustomed. The pantomime is expected to, and I have no doubt will, exceed a run of 100 nights; a run only once made before with "La Fille du Tambour Major," which was played for 102 consecutive evenings. "Sinbad the Sailor," is drawing fairly well at the Opera House, but its days are numbered. "Called Back" is in active rehearsal, and will shortly be produced. In point of excellence of book, cast, scenery, or mounting, "Sinbad" is not to be compared to "Cinderella." The Bijou Theatre, under the management of Messrs. Geo. Rignold and Jas. Allison, has also been crammed ever since Boxing-night by enthusiastic audiences, assembled to see "Confusion." The comedy is a thorough and unqualified success. The management have initiated a series of Saturday *matinées*, which, *mirabile dictu*, are well attended. A long run is anticipated for "Confusion." The Princess's Theatre is closed, as the company are nearly all in "Cinderella." This old-time theatre is to come down, and the foundation-stone of a new and elaborate one is to be laid next May. "Red Riding Hood" is the pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, and is reported to be drawing well. The Dunning Opera Company are now playing "Boccaccio" at the Gaiety Theatre, in the same city, with Mr. J. B. Appleby and Miss Annette Ivanova as the principal attractions. Miss Ivanova was married the other day, in Adelaide, South Australia, to the Hon. Clement Tyrwhitt, fourth son of Sir Henry Thomas Tyrwhitt, Baronet. "La Fille de Madame Angot" was produced as a novelty at the Opera House, Sydney, the other day, from which you may easily infer that Sydney is an extremely enlightened place. Theatres in Adelaide are very dull; the town is stagnant, and good companies will not go there. A company is supporting Mrs. Chippendale and Miss Marie Lanyon, "the English Actress"—save the mark!—at the Theatre Royal, in Gilbert's fairy comedies. John F. Sheridan and "Fun on the Bristol" are in Christchurch, New Zealand; Miss Génévieve Ward is in Auckland, and Miss Marie De Grey in Dunedin, both in the same country. Brisbane, Queensland, is at the mercy of a juvenile opera and burlesque company. Mrs. Marion Stammers, who came here with Mr. Arthur Garner's London Comedy Company some years ago, left for London last Friday. Miss Amy Crawford is on tour in New Zealand with a scratch company; and Mr. Fleming Norton is here, in Melbourne, disengaged, and likely to remain so. Miss Fanny Reid and Geo. Leitch are in Hobart, Tasmania, where Messrs. Leitch and Jas. MacMahon manage a theatre. Tasmania is proverbially slow, and I have not heard that the managers have made much money, at least as yet.

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I have received the following letter from the eldest daughter of my old friend Mr. Planché, which I publish with pleasure. But I may perhaps be permitted to remark, with reference to this and other similar communications, that my paper on "The Stage and the Age," did not

profess to be a history of the stage from all time, but treated chiefly of the stage between the years 1860 and 1885. Planché had, of course, not ceased writing for the stage in 1860; but his work done with Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews was done years before that, and before my time as a critical playgoer. The decadence and decay, of which I spoke roughly, existed between the end of Charles Kean's management at the Princess's and the discovery, not of the comedian Irving, but of the tragic Irving.

"*March* 19, 1885.

"Sir,—In your admirable address on the stage, which appears to-day reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, I regret to see that you have entirely omitted to mention the *perfect* productions by Madame Vestris, at Covent Garden Theatre, during her lesseeship, of several of Shakespeare's fine plays, the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' 'Love's Labour's Lost,' 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' and 'Romeo and Juliet,' and others, for Mr. Charles Kemble's last appearances, besides the comedies and serious plays of the old dramatists, and several of the most celebrated modern (notably Sheridan Knowles) writers for the stage. My father, Mr. Planché, is mainly spoken of in these last days of the decadence of the stage as a writer of extravaganzas *only*. But 'The Jewess,' 'Charles XII.' and many plays written for Farren the elder, Liston, and the finest actors of *that* day, entitle him to rank with those who endeavoured to refine and keep intact the taste of the public. I cannot pass by the omission without pointing it out to you; and I hope that some one more competent to represent this to you will do so, as an act of justice to Madame Vestris and my father, who can no longer represent themselves.

"I have the honour to be, sir, yours faithfully,

"The Eldest Daughter of Mr. Planché."

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The lecture on "The Stage and The Age," referred to above and read before the members of the Playgoers' Club on March 17, has been published by Mr. Samuel French, 89, Strand, price one shilling.

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Origin of Licensing Plays.—Sir Robert Walpole has the reputation of being the contriver of the Act of Parliament for submitting theatrical performances to the direction of the Lord Chamberlain, and thereby establishing a censorship on the drama. The manner of effecting this purpose gave great offence at the time. An underling was procured to write a dramatic piece, under the title of "The Golden Rump," a farrago of blasphemy and political abuse, also a ridicule of moral and religious institutions. It was then presented to Giffard (one of the managers), who, previously having been taught his part, took it to the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole. He—shocked at such a mass of enormity—carried the play to the House of Commons, and read some of the worst passages. An Act was immediately passed for submitting all dramatic pieces to the Lord Chamberlain's inspection. It was passed by the Commons without one dissentient vote.

John Ryder and Yorick's Skull.—Ryder, a native of Margate, always held in high estimation by his towns-folk—a numerous class of tradesmen, pilots, and fishermen, who pinned their faith on his acting. "Master Jack" invariably drew good houses. One evening he was announced for Hamlet. This was a grand event for the town. Night came; all went well until a sudden recollection of the property-man that he had forgotten Yorick's skull. Here was a dilemma. The grave scene would be ruined. Ryder was informed of the accident—stormed and raved like a madman. One of the actors suggested that Ryder knew the dentist of the place. He always exhibited a highly-polished ivory skull. The thought was a good one. Away flew the property-man—returning just in time with the skull for the grave-digger's scene. Hamlet received the skull from the first grave-digger. Carefully handling it, Ryder, followed by Horatio, walked down the stage to the foot-lights, gazing on the skull:—"Alas! poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft." The skull's mouth opened and shut at these words, and continued to do so. Ryder had touched the spring. Shouts of laughter greeted this event. Hamlet quickly gave the skull to the grave-digger, and rushed off the stage to kill the unfortunate property-man; but he, wisely, had left the theatre, leaving Hamlet and the buried majesty of Denmark to themselves.

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Tautology.—Davy Alexander, the eccentric manager of the Glasgow Theatre, was a most thrifty man; economy ruled all his dealings. "Bawbees" (halfpennies) created "pun's" (pounds). "Save, save. There's naething like 'siller,' mon." He endeavoured to save a shilling by omitting the "supers" whenever he could. On one occasion—the play "The West Indian"—Belcour, the high-comedy part, played by a Mr Wallis. In a front scene he had to deliver a long soliloquy, seated at a table, supposed to be waiting for a friend. Alexander asked Wallis to clear the stage of the table and two chairs. This was to save the "bawbees." "What, sir," said Wallis, "I, supposed to be a high-born man of fashion, do such menial work? No, sir, no." "Tut, tut, mon, dinna fash; it's easy enough to be done. When you've finished your speech, say, 'I fear my friend is ill; this is the hour he promised to be here'—off goes one chair; 'I hope no accident has occurred to him'—away with second chair; now call loudly for your serving-man, 'Tom! Tom! 'Sdeath, rascal, where are you?' —dragging table to the wing—'I'll discharge you, Tom.' Canna you see how easy it is, mon?" Grumbling, Wallis consented to do it. Night came. First chair removed; Belcour observing, "I am certain Frank has mistook the hour." Second, travels to the wing with, "I am sure he mistook the hour." Alexander at the wing popped his head on the stage in sight of the audience, "Hold your whist, you said that before; it's tautology, sir." A peal of laughter from the audience did not improve matters. Wallis, enraged, loudly replied, "Then let Tautology clear the stage; for d——d if I will," stalking off. "Verra weel, sir, verra weel. You shall leave my theatre Saturday week."

# My Town.

MY town, beside its own fair waters seated,
Whose wharves and sun-tipped spires and shining bay
The wanderer, sick for sight of home, has greeted
With joyful tears of welcome many a day.

The port of sad farewells and happy meetings;
Each street, and church, and shop, how well I know—
Its docks where, punctual as the pulse's beatings,
The monster ocean mail ships come and go.

Its breeze-swept common—where is gorse so golden,
Or May so fragrant?—with whose sod, our pain
All o'er, we blend at last; its gateways olden,
And hoary walls that recollect the Dane.

My birthplace, like a living thing extended
Along the margin of its waters, where
The glow of Autumn sunsets is so splendid,
The sheen of Summer moonlight is so fair!

Each week the tranquil street, so long the centre
On which my world revolved, once more I pace,
And pass the house I dare no longer enter—
Ghosts haunt it which I cannot bear to face.

Yet fancy oft reverts and round it hovers;
I dwell there still and all things seem the same;
I hear the tread of feet the clay now covers,
And voices, hushed for ever, call my name.

I pitch a tent elsewhere since Time, the Vandal,
Destroyed my household hearth; yet still I own,
With all its social gossip, sin, and scandal,
I love it—home the first, and last—*my* town.

Elise Cooper.

# THE THEATRE.

## Notes by an Old Playgoer.

Motley's the only wear.

By Charles Hervey.

WHEN I was living at Brighton some five-and-thirty years ago, the theatre, which under the intelligent direction of Mrs. Nye Chart now triumphantly holds its own, was generally regarded as an undesirable speculation. It was then managed by one of the innumerable Vinings and a local dentist of the name of Bew, the former chiefly attending to business matters, while the latter luxuriated in the "dolce far niente" of a sleeping partner. Except on rare occasions, when the performances were specially patronized by some influential resident or visitor, the inhabitants contributed little towards the prosperity of the establishment; although the company was a better one than the majority of provincial theatres at that period could boast. Marston—the same, if I recollect rightly, who subsequently achieved a metropolitan celebrity as the Ghost in "Hamlet"—played the melodramatic villains, his great card being Rigolio in the "Broken Sword"; and a very humorous low comedian named Dodd, not unlike John Reeve in face and figure, gave a capital imitation of "glorious John" as Bob Buckskin in "P. P.; or, the Man and the Tiger." In those days the engagement of "stars" was not of frequent occurrence; and when they did come, very few (except Charles Kean and his wife, who invariably drew good houses) succeeded in overcoming the apathy of the Brightonians. Even Farren, in "Uncle John" and "Nicholas Flam," failed to attract; and "pretty, merry Taylor" (afterwards Mrs. Walter Lacy), whose Kate O'Brien, in "Perfection," was, next to that of Madame Vestris, the best I ever remember seeing,

might, like Mr. Bob Sawyer, have put all the profits of her excursion in a (very small-sized) wine-glass, and covered them over with a gooseberry leaf.

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Levassor, of the Palais Royal, was a marvellously clever mimic, as those who have seen him in his three characters of "Brelan de troupiers" can testify. Once, at a dinner given to his interpreters by the author of a successful piece, he offered his comrade Lhéritier a bet that, before the party broke up, he would so disguise himself as not to be recognized by any one present. "Done," said Lhéritier. At the end of dinner Levassor quietly slipped out of the room, and a moment later appeared a waiter bearing a tray of coffee-cups, which he placed before the guests. While pouring out the coffee he contrived to break Mdlle. Déjazet's saucer, to let fall a spoonful of the hot liquid on Hyacinthe's nose, and to upset Mdlle. Ozy's cup on Ravel's waistcoat. Every one was furious, but worse was yet to come. Taking suddenly hold of a lump of sugar, he coolly introduced it into Déjazet's cup and swallowed the "canard" with infinite relish. This was too much. Lhéritier jumped up, and, seizing the offender by the arm, was about to expel him forcibly, when the other, stripping off his wig and a pair of bushy whiskers, disclosed Levassor, who, after quietly reminding his colleague that he had lost his bet, took his seat at the table as if nothing had happened, amid a roar of delight from the assembly.

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Monsieur Comte, formerly manager of the little theatre in the Passage Choiseul, previous to its transformation into the Bouffes Parisiens, once told me an anecdote of his father, a famous conjuror in the early part of the present century. Happening to be at Lyons on a market-day, he invested three sous in the purchase of an egg from a peasant woman sitting at her stall, and then slipped down as if by accident, contriving that the egg should be broken in the fall. As he picked it up, the woman clearly saw him extract a napoleon from inside the yolk, and put it mysteriously into his pocket, after which he strolled unconcernedly away. Presently he returned, and offered to buy all the remaining eggs in her basket; and on her refusal to sell them at any price, saying that she had been a great fool to let him have one, retired apparently much disappointed. Without more ado she ran home,

and broke every egg in her stock, in hopes of discovering a treasure existing only in her own imagination; and finding nothing, hastened back in a fury to the market-place, but, as might be expected, never set eyes on the conjuror again.

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When Charles Mathews was rehearsing "L'Anglais Timide" at the Variétés, he came one evening into the *foyer*, and was introduced to the different actors of the company. One of them, a stout individual, wearing an elaborately curled flaxen wig, especially attracted his notice. "Who is that?" he asked. "Blondelet," replied the stage-manager, Rousseau. "Blond et laid," said Mathews; "eh bien, je m'en serais douté!"

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I once saw Mdlle. Georges off the stage in a meanly furnished apartment of the Rue du Helder, which she occupied with her sister, Mdlle. Georges *cadette*. She was enormously stout and feeble in her gait, and, except her eyes, which were still wonderfully expressive, retained not a single trace of her former beauty. I remember hearing Tom Harel, then manager of the Folies Dramatiques, relate that when his father, the well-known impecunious impresario, accompanied the celebrated actress on her provincial tours, he insisted on the insertion of the following notice in the bills: "Mademoiselle Georges will appear to-night in diamonds worth thirty thousand francs. N.B.—Mademoiselle Georges wears nothing false." He also repeated, with great gusto, one of the paternal maxims: "When you are in want of a 'star,' stick at nothing, and promise whatever he asks; but, when the time comes for paying, *don't!*"

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Mr. Edmund Yates's entertaining autobiography recalls to my memory a curious fact, which may not be generally known—viz., that no less than five ladies bearing the name of Yates have appeared at various periods on the London stage. Old Richard Yates, of Drury Lane, was thrice married—first, to an actress of minor note; secondly, to the great tragic artist, the rival of Mrs. Cibber; and thirdly, to an actress of inferior merit, who played at Drury Lane as Mrs. Yates, and after her husband's death as Mrs. Ansell. These were succeeded by a Mrs. Yates, wife of a low comedian in Dublin, who appeared at Covent Garden in 1818 (her portrait is given in the *Belle Assemblée* of that year);

and lastly by Miss Brunton, whom many of us still remember as the wife of Frederick Yates, and the mainstay of popular drama at the old Adelphi.

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In 1846 I paid a visit to Mdlle. Maxime Richard, then regarded by her partisans—but by no one else—as the successful rival of Rachel. She was modestly lodged on the fourth floor of a house in the Rue de la Michodière, and from her dress and manner I at first took her for a servant, for she opened the door herself, and had both the tone and appearance of a *bonne à tout faire.* No one would ever have imagined her as the haughty Elizabeth of "Marie Stuart," or conceived the possibility of her having succeeded (as she undoubtedly did) in Phèdre." Her voice was unpleasantly harsh, and her gestures were the very reverse of classical repose. Since her retirement from the Théâtre Français, chiefly on account of a part in Victor Hugo's "Burgraves" being taken from her and given to Madame Mélingue, she had evidently abandoned all hope of reconquering her position, and was extremely bitter in her allusions to the "scandalous" treatment experienced by her at the hands of the committee. I was not sorry when the interview came to a close, and as I never heard any more of her, conclude that she wisely accepted the inevitable, and

> Rather than be less,
> Cared not to be at all.

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The following anonymous description of Mdlle. Déjazet, copied from the *Morning Post* of June 20, 1844, may be new to many of my readers, and seems to me worth preserving:—

> She has not grace, she is not fair;
> Her form is short, her figure spare;
> Her arms are thin, her hands are great ones,
> Her legs are very far from straight ones;
> Her head has lost its silky clusters,
> She's seen heav'n knows how many lustres;
> Her mouth is wide, and shrill her voice is,
> Which in a nasal twang rejoices;
> And for her character—why really
> It cannot be discussed genteelly.
> How is it then that mighty flocks
> Rush to St. James's stall and box,
> And tho' nor good, nor wise, nor pretty,
> She turns the heads of half the city?
> What is the secret, what the spell,
> Is't air from heav'n, or blast from hell?

What spells like thine can witch the sense,
O dear delightful impudence!
That utter coolness nought can crush—
That incapacity to blush—
That calm self-confidence and ease
That say and do whate'er they please,
If not *against*, at least *without*
All shame and modesty, and doubt—
That absolute repudiation
Of ev'ry rule and regulation;
These, with a witty, lively air,
And always taking special care,
*Imprimis*, that said impudence
Be not indulged *at our expense*,
*Secundo*, to keep clear and free
From grossness and vulgarity,
These are the spells, and these the arts
That, by commanding, win our hearts;
And these can more the wits enthrall
Than wisdom, beauty, youth and all.

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Peake was once solicited by a lady to contribute something to her album, and, taking up a pen, wrote as follows:

Since 'tis my autograph you seek,
Behold it scribbled—R. B. Peake.

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When the first Madame de Girardin was Mdlle. Delphine Gay, long before she dreamt of writing that charming masterpiece, "La joie fait peur," she used occasionally to recite verses of her composition in the *salons* of the Faubourg St. Germain. One evening, she had just finished delighting her audience with a specimen of her talent when a fashionable beauty came up to her, and complimented her warmly on the possession of so admirable a gift.

"Nay, madame," was Delphine's pretty reply, "I ought rather to compliment you; for there is more merit in inspiring poetry as you do, than in writing it."

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Here is a characteristic reminder of old Barnes, the pantaloon, to his friend Taylor, dated from the King's Bench, September 29, 1831.

"Why don't you come and see me, d—l take you? You know very well I am *always at home*."

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A dramatist, after reading his comedy to the committee of the Théâtre Français, had the mortification of learning that it had been unanimously rejected. Chancing the next day to meet Samson, one of his judges, he reproached him for having condemned his

bantling without hearing it; "for you know," he said, "that you fell asleep before I had half finished it."

"My good sir," coolly replied the author of "La Belle-Mère et le Gendre," "what better proof can you possibly require that my opinion of your piece was perfectly justified?"

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Nestor Roqueplan, successively manager of the Opéra, the Opéra Comique, and the Variétés, was almost as professed a *gourmet* as Monselet, and so devoted to the asphalt of the Boulevard that even a day's absence from his beloved capital was considered by him an irremediable calamity. Being asked which of the pretty environs around the city he preferred, Ville d'Avray, Enghien, or Fontaine-aux-Roses, he answered that the only spot on earth he had a real affection for was the one where the first green peas of the season were to be found, namely Paris.

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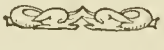
Munyard, a clever low comedian of the old Adelphi, who, I believe, died young, was one day anxiously inquiring of the author of a forthcoming "screamer" how many good parts were in it, adding that he had been shelved for a long time, and was very desirous of making a hit.

"Don't be alarmed," replied the dramatist; "this time you'll find it all right."

"Ah," said the disappointed actor, "that is just what I was afraid of; *all Wright*, and nobody else."



LORD BYRON AND THE MOON.—When Byron was a boy, he lived with his mother, Mrs. Captain Gordon Byron, at Nottingham. His nurse was allowed to take him occasionally to the theatre. One evening the play was "Katherine and Petruchio." The boy, about eight years old—much delighted—paid great attention to the acting. When the scene came on and the dispute about the moon—

PET. "How bright and goodly shines the moon."
KATH. "The moon! the sun! it is not moonshine now!"
PET. "I say it is the moon that shines so bright."
KATH. "I know it is the sun that shines so bright."

At this point Byron jumped up from his seat in the boxes, loudly exclaiming: "Don't believe her, sir; she is not telling the truth. It is the moon; it was shining when I came in." Peals of laughter, in which the players joined, greeted the boy's action.

# A Ballad of Dreams.

Et plus divin est le rêve
Plus sombre en sera le réveil.

I.

WHAT castles in the air we build,
When youthful blood runs hot and strong,
With wond'rous sights our sleep is filled,
Fantastic as a poet's song;
A thousand airy fancies throng,
Days of romance begin anew,
Our souls would burn to right the wrong,
If all our dreams were only true.

II.

We dream, as knights of old romance,
Our daring banners are unfurled,
And for the sake of Iseult's glance,
Sir Bevis in the dust is hurled;
Then see through ringlets soft and curled,
Our lady's eyes look soft and blue:
Ah me! it were a happy world,
If all our dreams were only true.

III.

And if for gold our spirits crave,
Or if in gems our souls delight,
Sleep leads us to Aladdin's cave,
To show us many a gorgeous sight;
And could our fancies stay their flight,
Nor at the morning bid adieu,
Life was as an Arabian night,
If all our dreams were only true.

Envoi.

Ah Prince! when sadly breaks the dawn,
Dreams vanish like the morning dew;
We would not thus be left forlorn,
If all our dreams were only true.

F. W. Hume.

Dunedin, N.Z.

# Recollections of Ryder.

By Henry Turner.

THE recent death of excellent John Ryder has recalled to my memory very vividly the occasion when I first beheld him. I was a very small boy when I was taken to see the pantomime of "Harlequin William Tell," at Drury Lane, in the year 1843 (January). The pantomime was preceded by "King John," with Macready in the principal part. Fancy, ye modern holiday-makers, a five-act tragedy followed by a pantomime! Now-a-days, at the same theatre, the pantomime occupies the entire evening. Ryder played Cardinal Pandulph. Little did I think that, forty years subsequently, I should form one of a circle of listeners at the club, the while the veteran actor poured forth a stream of anecdotes of his theatrical career, related as only he could tell them. The charge is frequently made, that actors are somewhat disappointing when encountered in society. However this may be, I have never met actors with any experience who were not amusing in the highest degree when discoursing on what they naturally understand—their profession and the history of their early struggles and experiences. Accustomed to study effect, they are capital anecdote tellers, never missing the point, and leaving off when the climax is reached. On Ryder's arrival in London, he had an interview with Charles Kemble, who proposed that he should make his first appearance as Romeo. Ryder objected, on the ground that he was too tall. Kemble rose from his chair, and extending his arms and drawing himself up to his full height, exclaimed, "Too tall, sir; look at me! I have played Romeo scores of times." Ryder made no response, but considered that the public would condone much in a Kemble that it would not excuse in a novice. Ryder eventually appeared at Drury Lane in "As You Like It," in the character of the Banished Duke. On the occasion to which I have referred, Phelps played Hubert, Helen Faucit, Constance; Elton, Salisbury; and James Anderson the Bastard Faulconbridge. I am frequently asked by members of the rising generation whether we have better actors now than we

had thirty and forty years ago. My reply is always the same: that different types flourish at different periods. Thus I can recall no actress in the past who can be compared with Mrs. Bancroft. There is no actress of our day who resembles Mrs. Keeley. Then the style of acting is completely changed. Were "The Lady of Lyons" played now at a West-end theatre in the "stagey" manner formerly adopted (the only way, in my opinion, it should be played), the representatives of Claude and Pauline would be received with shouts of laughter and derision. What is called the natural manner is adopted, and the result is a misfit. When "London Assurance" was revived at the Prince of Wales' Theatre under the Bancroft management, the part of Lady Gay Spanker was played in the modern style. The famous description of the hunt was spoken by Mrs. Kendal, seated at a drawing-room table, precisely as a lady in real life would relate the incident, and the effect was *nil!* Mrs. Nisbett was accustomed to deliver the lines close to the foot-lights, with eyes fixed on the audience, and at the close would cross from left to right, and back again, cracking her whip as she did so. The effect was electrical. All honour to the exponents of the modern realistic school of acting, but dramas written under different conditions must be acted in a different manner. There is no actor of the present day who at all resembles James Anderson, with his magnificent elocution, which echoed through Drury Lane two-and-forty years ago. By-the-way, it is a singular fact that actors who have reached the topmost rung of the professional ladder have never been remarkable for elocutionary excellence, but the reverse. John Kemble suffered from an asthmatic cough; Edmund Kean could not speak half a dozen lines without temporarily losing his voice. On the occasion of his first appearance as Shylock at Drury Lane, in 1814, he was chased by the stage manager from the stage to his dressing-room with continual supplies of oranges, fears being entertained that the marvellous success which was then being achieved would be marred by complete loss of voice. Macready, with his jerky, disjointed mode of utterance, was not a model of elocution; and the most devoted admirers of Mr. Henry Irving would scarcely hold him up as a perfect elocutionist. These men succeeded, in spite of this defect, by the sheer force of genius and brains. The most excellent samples of elocution in my experience have been James Anderson,

John Vandenhoff, Gustavus Brooke, John Cooper (utility John), and Hermann Vezin. Charles Young is reported to have been renowned for his musical elocution ; yet none of these actors attained the topmost rank. I can only compare the tones of Vandenhoff to the notes of a cathedral organ. We are accustomed to boast, and with reason, of the excellence of modern representations, so far as scenery and costumes are concerned ; but nothing could surpass the magnificence and correctness of the mounting of "King John," under the direction of Macready. Plays which I have witnessed at long subsequent dates are blurred and indistinct in my memory ; but the recollection of that evening is as vivid as though I had witnessed the play a month ago. I can still hear in imagination the pathetic tones of Helen Faucit, as, seated on the floor of the stage, she exclaimed : "Here is my throne : bid kings come bow to it."

I can see the citizens on the walls of Angiers (admirably trained supers) as they watch with excited gestures the approach of the English host. The evening was an epoch in my dramatic experience. Ryder always received a round of applause for his "make-up" of Salemenes in Byron's play of "Sardanapalus," when it was produced by Charles Kean at the Princess's Theatre. He might have walked from one end of ancient Nineveh to the other without exciting remark. He was a truculent-looking Ironbrace in "Used Up," and constituted an admirable foil to the slim figure of Charles Mathews in the character of Sir Charles Coldstream. His Macduff, though somewhat coarse and wanting in the pathos with which Mr. Phelps was accustomed to invest the part, was of considerable merit, and so fierce in the final scene that a spectator ignorant of the termination of the play (if that is possible) could have no doubt of the result of the combat with the puny representative of Macbeth—Mr. Charles Kean. Apropos of Phelps, I witnessed his performance of Macduff to the Macbeth of Macready on the occasion of his farewell at Drury Lane in 1851. At the end of the fourth act, after the great scene, in which Macduff bewails the loss of his wife and children, there was a universal call for Phelps, but the actor modestly (and properly) declined to appear, considering that all the honours of that evening rightly belonged to his old chief. Ryder was very good as the brusque colonel in "The Lancers," in which David Fisher made his first appearance from Glasgow, in the year 1853. This is the

same character which Mr. Hare plays so effectively in "The Queen's Shilling," another version of the same piece. Ryder was admirable as Gabor, in Lord Byron's play of "Werner." This play seems to have died with Macready. Only one word can describe his performance of Werner—*perfection;* Creswick was Ulric—a noteworthy trio. It seems but yesterday that I was seated in the Haymarket pit, watching with delight Miss Neilson as Juliet; Charles Harcourt the Mercutio (his best part); while in a private box was seated Ryder, in earnest converse with Tom Taylor. The play of "Anne Boleyn" was at that date in rehearsal; and doubtless the editor of *Punch* was delivering his views as to how the hapless Queen should be portrayed by the Juliet of the night to the old "coach" and tutor of Adelaide Neilson.

All are now numbered with the past, the eldest being the last to go.

# "In a Balcony."

(*A Paper read before the "Browning Society" on February* 27, 1885.)

ON the production of "In a Balcony" the Browning Society are to be congratulated. The bold experiment will remain an event, memorable alike in our artistic annals and in the records of Miss Alma Murray's career, at whose hands the heroine's part, after a poetic life of thirty years, received its dramatic embodiment.

However widely opinions may vary as to the fitness or unfitness of "In a Balcony" for stage representation, it must on all hands be admitted that in Constance Mr. Browning has enriched our dramatic literature with a complex poetic rôle, which not only is true to art and nature, but offers, from a histrionic standpoint, ample opportunity for legitimate display.

With regard to the part itself, any detailed analysis of its conception and development has been rendered unnecessary by Mrs. Turnbull's paper, read before you in July last, and the discussion which followed. I would only suggest, as a general view of Browning's greatest female creation, that in virtue of her

girlhood, her fate, and the rich poetic presentment of her character, she is worthy of a place in the tragic sisterhood already existing between Shakespeare's Juliet and Shelley's Beatrice Cenci. As Racine truly says in the preface to his own exquisite tragedy "Bérénice:" "It is not a necessity that there should be blood and "death in a tragedy; it is enough that the action should be exalted, "that the persons should be heroic, the passions stirred, and that "the whole atmosphere should breathe that lofty earnestness in "which the entire pleasure of tragedy consists."

Constance seems to me to meet all the requirements of a genuinely tragic part. She is the prime mover of an action in the highest dramatic sense of the word *exalted*. In her determination to sacrifice herself to Norbert's seeming worldly welfare, as in her acceptance of the consequences of her "mighty error," she is equally *heroic*. She has ample opportunity for *stirring the nobler emotions* of her audience. Her whole language is, from the very first, permeated with that *lofty earnestness* which, when heard from the stage, invariably raises forebodings of the speaker's destiny; and, finally, at the fall of the curtain, she is left in that state of ecstatic severance from her surroundings which would make any return on her part to the common world as æsthetically inconsequent as that of Beatrice Cenci would be after the close of the fifth act.

Thus much of Constance generally, regarded as a dramatic rôle. But there is still a special word to be said on the nature of the verse allotted to her, which, from the intelligent actress's point of view, is in itself sufficient to render her an attractive and grateful part. What I mean is this:—That in the fundamental texture of the lines there is always present that rare and essential quality which lends itself to imaginative gesture, look, and movement, and which stamps the language as authentically that of a play for stage presentation, in contradistinction to that of a mere poem in dialogue.

Powerful as are the parts of both Norbert and the Queen, in the direct eloquence of their passionate poetry, Constance is undoubtedly the dramatic "be all and end all" of the piece. The time occupied in its representation is just an hour and a quarter, and from the first word to the last she is without intermission conspicuously in the eye of the audience. To such an ordeal no actress had probably hitherto been exposed, and to say that Miss Murray passed through it unscathed, would be paying an inade-

quate tribute to her versatility and sustaining powers. Indeed, during her entire impersonation, not a moment passed without affording some special and high delight to the sense of sight or hearing, or to both at once.

With regard to the long speeches against which so much has been urged, we do not know how they might sound from the lips of other actresses; but as spoken by Miss Murray, at all events, they seemed to afford scope for securing her most marked effects. The fascination of her voice, her perfect enunciation of vowel and consonant, and the varied and vital rhythm of her delivery, imparted to the verse a delicate and sonorous beauty, which, *in itself*, affected the listener with a feeling of keen and continuous gratification. However long and however trying may be the speech she has to deal with, she never relapses from the method of the actress into that of the mere reciter. Every line or sentence is given as if it were the immediate organic outcome of the external or internal dramatic moment; as if it had never necessarily been uttered before, and need never necessarily be uttered again. There is, moreover, in the voice itself a peculiarly stimulating property which keeps the sense of the hearer continually on the alert, and precludes, in Constance's longest speeches, all feeling of weariness or monotony, such as might easily be occasioned, even by a highly-skilled elocutionist, whose voice was only sweet, and nothing more. In repose and silence, Miss Murray is frequently as impressive as in speech and movement, while to those who carefully watched her, when listening to any of the extended speeches of Norbert or the Queen, her face appeared so full of quick and vivid comment, that any sense of unusual length in the speech was lost, and the situation was felt to be one of the swiftest and subtlest dialogue. This faculty of picturesque and interpretative listening is a fundamental requisite, which the author of such rôles as Constance, the Queen, and Norbert is entitled to demand from those who render them, though his right is apt to be overlooked by people who judge of the dramatic value of a situation or a speech from the mere aspect which it offers on the printed page.

Passing to the primary and less definable qualities indispensable to the ideal embodiment of a part like Constance, such as style, charm, distinction, authority, and individuality, Miss Murray gave signal manifestations of them all. Her

individuality is especially noteworthy, as being, in spite of the great strength of its relief, essentially normal and typically feminine. No eccentricities, tricks, mannerisms, familiarities, or condescensions, mar the purity of method whereby she reaches the highest states of emotional exaltation, without apparent effort, or sacrifice of naturalness. Her whole physique and general stage-bearing stamp her as one of those exceptional personalities whose "assigned and native dwelling-place" seems to be the world of poetic incident and poetic speech. It is thus that, admirable artist as she has so frequently proved herself in modern comedy and drama of almost every legitimate type, it is only in the distinctively poetic school that her qualifications appear to reach their utmost potentiality, and to be brought into complete requisition.

The distinguishing attribute of Constance's character is its *complexity*, which brings her intellectually into as close a relationship with Shakespeare's Portia as it does emotionally with his Juliet. Such is the unparalleled subtlety with which the two sides of her nature touch, part and interpenetrate, that there is no small difficulty in instituting accurate comparisons between this and the famous female rôles of our classic literature. On the whole, however, I am inclined to think that of all the great emotional heroines of our poetic drama Constance is essentially the most intellectual. It was particularly fortunate that Miss Alma Murray should have been selected for her first exponent, for it would be hard to find an actress in whom these deeply inherent characteristics are more completely blended. Hence it is that Miss Murray's Constance, while in full measure satisfying to the senses and the heart of the ordinary playgoer, afforded to the more thoughtful of those who witnessed it abundant and lasting food for mental comment and reflection.

This is especially the case with her treatment of that magnificent section of the play which embraces the Queen's surprisal of the lovers, and the consequent precipitation of their fate. The subtlety, the *verve*, the finish, the brilliance, and the breadth of style exhibited in the forced and fatal comedy she plays between the Queen and Norbert, were only equalled by the tone of ecstatic and passionate resignation infused into the last scene, where it almost seemed as if she had already passed beyond the impending

death, and was, in her own and Norbert's words, "past harm now, on the breast of God."

The picture she presented at the words, "which is the first and last rewarding kiss," as she stood between the Queen and Norbert, her eyes covertly flashing from one to the other, her whole face and attitude full of mingled deprecation and defiance of the threatening fate, was such as a lifetime of play-going would not serve to efface from the memory; while the strained hysteric laughter accompanying the words "for him, he knows his own part," coming like a revelation from the stricken depths of an heroic but mistaking woman's nature, was almost overpowering in its poignancy.

As one not professionally versed in dramatic criticism, it is but natural that I should have experienced some diffidence in placing upon record any opinion regarding Miss Murray's acting, but that feeling was considerably lessened on reading an article from the talented pen of Mr. Frederick Wedmore in the *Academy*, wherein he says: "Miss Alma Murray's Constance was nothing less than "a great performance, instinct with intelligence, grace, and fire. "The more exacting was the situation, the more evident became "the capacity of the actress to grapple with it. It was the per- "formance of an artist who had thought of all the part contained, "and had understood it—who knew how to compose a rôle as a "whole, and how to execute it, alike in its least and in its most "important detail. It is long since our stage has seen an interpre- "tation more picturesque or more moving."

Miss Murray would indeed seem to be one of those favoured artistic individualities in whom, while yet in the full freshness of youth, all histrionic qualities, physical, emotional, intellectual, and technical, are found assembled in that state of exact organic equilibrium indispensable for the realization of truly tragic conceptions. It was, therefore, no matter of surprise to learn that, only a few days previous to her appearance in "In a Balcony," she had, in the critical Scottish capital, achieved an unqualified triumph as Shakespeare's foremost heroine. It may, perhaps, hereafter be considered a noteworthy coincidence, that Miss Murray's conspicuous impersonation of Constance, and her ideally adequate rendering of Juliet, should have happened at the moment when there are indications of a reaction against the stage-luxury now in vogue, and of a growing desire on the

part of the public to see the masterpieces of our poetic drama redeemed from perturbing influences, and once again presented as primarily dependent on the acting. May we not, then, in the light of these circumstances, venture to look forward with some degree of hope to a revival, at Miss Alma Murray's hands, of some of our old tragic glories, with, perhaps, the "creation" of the one or two great rôles in our poetic literature yet virgin to the life-touch of the actress?

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# James William Davison.

By a Musical Critic.

IT is with a feeling of profound sadness that the friends of James William Davison have heard of his death, which occurred rather suddenly at Margate on the 24th of March. No recipient of his hospitality at the detached house in Tavistock Place, where, amidst a profusion of books and pictures and busts, he kept his friends out of their beds until the small hours of the morning, can have other than pleasing memories of the great musical critic of the *Times*—a man of medium stature, slightly bent, all but bald, with keen hazel eyes and a straggly grey beard, somewhat carelessly dressed, often having recourse to a snuff-box, and compelled by a lameness in one of his feet to use a crutch in moving about. He united many estimable qualities of head and heart. He was at once an ardent musician, a ripe scholar, an impartial judge, a discursive reader, a genial humorist, a loyal and affectionate friend. "Characters like his," writes one who knew him well, Mr. Joseph Bennett, "are indeed rare. In his friendships he was chivalrous, almost quixotic. He knew nothing of half measures. In defence of those he loved he was ready not only to draw the sword but to throw away the scabbard. Few dared to assail them to his face, no matter though the point touched upon was avowedly weak. With him they were perfect, and perfect was his devotion. Let

us all acknowledge, as in the palace of truth we must, that a man capable of such thorough-going friendship, such unlimited love, is a character rarely evolved from the midst of the society in which we live. No wonder if all who looked beneath the surface of a manner that seemed often to trifle with seriousness were drawn to him by the bonds of an affection kindred to his own. He was lovable in his most wayward moods. He had an incisive tongue ; but to learn that in using it he had hurt a friend was with him to feel much more deeply hurt himself." And few men, it may be added, have shown so genuine and unaffected a modesty at all times and in all circumstances. He would descant in glowing language upon the merits of others without hinting at his own. He instinctively shrank from even seeming to obtrude himself upon public notice. He consistently declined to be photographed, interviewed, or, as far as he could prevent it, written about in any form. But the history of music and criticism in England would be sadly incomplete if it did not contain at least an outline of his career, which exercised a direct and salutary influence upon both.

His mother, as in the case of many other remarkable men, possessed no ordinary intellect and force of character. Maria Duncan was one of the brilliant group of actresses who delighted our forefathers towards the close of the Kemble period. Daughter of a provincial actor of repute, especially at Dublin and Liverpool, she took to the stage in her chiidhood, and, after a novitiate of ten years, appeared before a London audience at Drury Lane in the autumn of 1804 as Lady Teazle. From that night she was one of the main pillars of the theatre. In light comedy she proved a formidable rival to Mrs. Jordan, and her impersonation of Julia in "The Rivals" was sufficient to show that her talents were not confined to that particular walk of art. Her best original character seems to have been the heroine of "The Honeymoon," which owed much of its vitality to her acting. Her figure was symmetrical, her countenance somewhat masculine, her hair jet black. It is of importance to note that she had a decided predilection for music, sang with considerable expression, and occasionally appeared in operas with good success. Her rendering of Scotch songs is described as "wildly, beautifully, romantically sweet." In its way, we are

further told, nothing could have been more winsome than the manner in which she gave two lines in "Logie o' Buchan":—

> "I sit at my creepie, and spin at my wheel,
> And think o' the laddie that lo'es me sae weel."

In all kinds of comedy, to be brief, she went from triumph to triumph, eventually succeeding Mrs. Jordan in the lively characters so long associated with the name of that frail and wayward actress. At the close of 1812, in her twenty-ninth year, Miss Duncan married a gentleman well known in London society, Mr. Davison, and in the following October gave birth to the subject of the present sketch.

Davison received the best of his education at University College, within a stone's-throw of the luxurious home in which he grew up. It soon became evident that he had inherited his mother's taste for music. In early life he composed several songs, mostly to verses by Shelley and Keats, and acquired considerable skill as a pianist and organist. Mrs. Davison, seeing in him a sort of Hallé in the bud, placed him with Holmes for instruction, but could not restrain him from devoting himself exclusively to musical criticism. In this branch of literature, besides many ephemeral contributions to journalism, he wrote an "eloquent essay upon Chopin, full of enthusiasm, and more than once quoted with approval by Liszt in his life of that composer. It appeared anonymously; and later on, when the author's opinion of Chopin had undergone a considerable change, he looked upon this little volume—which, by the way, remained the only book or pamphlet he ever published—as a youthful indiscretion." His work as a journalist presently brought him under the notice of John Oxenford, who, with occasional assistance from Charles Lamb Kenney, had then acted for seven or eight years as dramatic and musical critic of the *Times*. Kenney going abroad, Davison was elected to fill the vacant place, and an enduring friendship sprang up between him and his brilliant chief. Soon afterwards, in 1846, an opportunity of displaying his special gifts and acquirements was presented to him by the production at the Birmingham Musical Festival of "Elijah." He profited by that opportunity to the full, writing on the spur of the moment what must still be regarded as one of the most luminous and exhaustive treatises on the greatest oratorio of the nineteenth century. Mendelssohn, whose genius had not yet been recognized, sought the

acquaintance of the young critic; they came to London together, and before long were inseparable companions. Five or six years ago I urged Davison to put his recollections of the composer upon record, but without success. His article on "Elijah," which attracted general attention, had an important effect upon his future. In or about 1848 he became the responsible musical critic of the *Times*, Kenney taking note of the fact in one of those rhymes which he liked to hurl at his friends :—

> "There was once a J. W. D.,
> Who thought a composer to be;
> But the world exclaimed 'Fudge!'
> So he set up as judge
> Over better composers than he."

For more than thirty years Davison held this enviable position with increasing honour to himself and the journal he represented. He possessed in a high degree the four necessary qualifications for his work—breadth of knowledge, catholicity of taste, fairness of judgment, and charm of style. Endowed with a surprisingly retentive memory, he was a walking storehouse of familiar and unfamiliar facts, from the general history of music down to the resources of particular instruments. He could give one off-hand, without reference to books, a detailed account of the history of any great opera that might be casually mentioned in his hearing. His sympathies as a musician, too, were extremely wide, though he may have failed to appreciate Schumann and Wagner at their right value. He found delight in music of essentially different kinds. His veneration for Beethoven and the other classical masters did not prevent him from listening with rapture to the scores of Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, and Auber. For the highest class of serious or gay music, whether German, Italian, or French, he seldom had anything but warm yet discriminating praise. It has been said that he was predisposed to be less just to new than to old composers; but no such condition of mind was apparent in his writings when he had to deal with the first efforts of a singer on the stage or in the concert-room. Here, as might be gathered from his kindly nature, he preferred to err on the side of leniency if he could do so without creating a false impression—a fault with which he need not be severely reproached. As for his style, it was characterized by rare purity, terseness, and grace, and will probably keep his memory alive. It would hardly be an

exaggeration to say that he never employed a foreign word when an English one would serve the same purpose. "Most of his readers," says Mr. Bennett, "must have thought, as they followed the clean-cut, strictly sequent sentences, that the task of writing them was an easy one. Nothing could be farther from the fact. Davison, when seriously at work, was a laborious writer. He would construct and reconstruct his sentences till hardly an original word remained, and his MS. might have passed for a representation of scribal chaos." It was not in the *Times* only that this stream of English undefiled could be found. He wrote at one time for the *Saturday Review*, and at another for the *Graphic*. He also edited the *Musical World*, in which his peculiar humour, usually suppressed elsewhere, shone forth in a variety of fantastic forms. Besides inducing Mr. Arthur Chappell to organize the Monday Popular Concerts, he contributed to the books of these entertainments a wealth of analytical notes, all of manifest excellence. In 1879, owing to failing health, he gradually relinquished his connection with the *Times*, and an important chapter in the history of journalism was therewith brought to an end.

Davison's services to the art he loved can hardly be over-rated. His attitude towards Schumann and Wagner may have been too hostile; but there can be no doubt that he persistently supported the highest interests of music, assisted to discover Mendelssohn and Berlioz, and, completing a work begun by Hogarth and Oxenford and Chorley, raised musical criticism from the level of reporting to much of the dignity which it has now assumed. It is to be hoped that a collection of his writings on the principal musical events of his time may shortly be made by a competent hand.

Elliston and Jack Bannister.—Bannister, the original "Walter," in the "Children in the Wood," made the character famous by his inimitable acting. When he quitted the stage, Elliston succeeded him in the part of Walter, and won golden opinions from press and public by his performance. A friend, alluding to this fact, with some remarks on Bannister's personation, not very complimentary, Elliston stopped him. "What, sir! Compare me to Bannister in 'Walter!' Are you mad? Pooh! pooh! sir. I am not worthy to buckle his shoes, sir, in the part. No, sir; I, Robert William Elliston, say so, and mean it, sir."

# Mr. Irving's Second Tour in America.

"SO ends the most astonishing professional progress any actor has ever made through this country." Thus wrote one of the foremost journalists of America the morning after Mr. Irving's last farewell to American play-goers in the Star Theatre, New York. It is a simple historical statement which can excite no controversy; for, whatever one may think of Henry Irving's practice of his art, there can be no doubt that the enterprise he has just carried to a triumphant conclusion is the most remarkable in the history of the American stage. At a time when the public was absorbed in a political contest of the greatest moment, and when the depression of trade had seriously affected nearly the whole theatrical world in the States, an English actor, supported by the most complete dramatic organization ever seen in the country, was able to visit many cities, charge high prices, and command a measure of public support that had scarcely been precedented. More than this, he was the guest of the chief University in America, and delivered a lecture on his art to the professors and students, and before he sailed for England he was entertained at a public banquet by the most representative assembly of distinguished Americans that it would be possible to gather together.

This simple summary of Mr. Irving's successes amongst our Transatlantic kindred is striking enough, but it gives a poor idea of the continuous interest which he and his associates have excited in America. The closing performances at the Star Theatre will be long remembered by the people who used to stand in a long line day after day at the box office, which the ticket speculators skirmished radiantly round, sure of capturing scores of citizens and making them pay two and three times the theatre price for the best seats. It is no use trying to fight the speculator; he is as certain as the mosquito, and much more chronic. Mr. Augustin Daly is trying to extinguish him; but it would be just as futile to pursue a gnat with a torpedo. The speculator is the product of

the excessive liberality of Americans with regard to their amusements. When they find at the box office that there are no seats worth having, they will pay the speculator thrice the value of the seats rather than go without their entertainment. The British householder is much more thrifty. If any of the speculative gentry were to try their game in London, Paterfamilias would simply button his coat, return home, and spend the evening in penning an indignant epistle to a newspaper.

But the throngs in the Star Theatre did not trouble themselves about cost. The last representations of "Hamlet," "Louis XI.," and "The Merchant of Venice," drew the greatest audiences ever seen in the theatre. "Louis XI." was played at the last *matinée*, and on the evening of the same day, April 4, Mr. Irving and Miss Terry spoke their last lines on the American stage. A more responsive audience no actors could have wished. Playgoers in New York are perhaps more demonstrative than even those in any other American city, and on an occasion of this kind, whatever could be done to show the admiration inspired, not only by this particular performance, but also by the entire work of two extraordinary artists, did not lack. There may have been some lingering belief that Mr. Irving would reconsider his determination never to return to America as an actor, and that in his farewell words this might at least be left an open question, but the unmistakable sincerity with which he repeated his resolve, and declared that duty to his theatre and his public at home would permit no more professional visits to the States, must have carried conviction to the majority of his hearers. The parting had all the impressiveness of a final separation, though Mr. Irving, reminded of the closeness of the intercourse between England and America, and of the troops of American friends who visit London every season, said that he should never play in the Lyceum without the consciousness that he was still addressing his American kinsmen. Then came a great demonstration of enthusiasm, and Mr. Irving and Miss Terry were many times recalled, and then the curtain rose on the entire company, and the band varied "Hail Columbia!" with "Auld Lang Syne," and after some more recalls the people went slowly and reluctantly away. It was a most remarkable exhibition of genuine feeling, and no actor could possibly receive a more convincing testimony of popular good-will.

The last and most striking honours bestowed by America on

Henry Irving were crowded almost into a single week, which, like the poet's hour of glorious life, was certainly worth an age without a name. In appearing before the academic body of Harvard University, Mr. Irving occupied a unique position. Years ago, I believe, the authorities at Harvard wanted to make Mr. William Warren, one of the most admirable of American comedians, a professor in the college, but he did not accept the office. Mr. Irving was therefore the first actor to receive academic honours in the chief centre of American culture. It was natural that he should choose as the theme of his address the art to which his life had been devoted, and to which he had rendered such good service. Nobody can say that he pitched his discourse in too apologetic a key. If there had been any necessity to apologize for the stage, the foremost of English actors would not have been invited by the professors of Harvard merely to sit in sackcloth and ashes. They did not take it amiss when Mr. Irving plainly stated his intention to give to any students who might be disposed at some time to become actors the advantages of a counsel gathered from a wide experience. And the students listened to his exposition of the requirements and practice of his art with profound interest. If any of them ever go on the stage, and fail to attain distinction, they will not be able to complain that his lights misled them. "It is true," he said, "that there must always be grades in the theatre, that an educated man who is an indifferent actor can never expect to reach the front rank. If he do no more than figure in the army at Bosworth Field, or look imposing in a doorway; if he never play any but the smallest parts; if in these respects he be no better than men who could not pass an examination in any branch of knowledge, he has no more reason to complain than the highly-educated man who longs to write poetry, and possesses every qualification save the poetic faculty." Mr. Irving addressed some other wholesome warnings to young actors; indeed, anything less like an over-coloured picture of the dramatic calling, or a rhetorical appeal calculated to stimulate the vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself, could not be imagined. At the same time, there was a distinct assertion of the claim of the art of acting to demand "the honourable exercise of some of the best faculties of the human mind." What Mr. Irving has himself done, and what has been achieved by other notable actors to sustain this theory was perhaps even more convincing to his

audience than his eloquence. As they listened to this earnest man who stood at a reading-desk on the stage of this model theatre, "the only actor in our play," picturesque and graceful, even without the glamour of theatrical lights and costumes and scenery, they recalled the many vivid impressions they had received from Hamlet, Shylock, and Louis; they were revisited in memory by the grace and sweetness of Ophelia, Portia, Viola, and Beatrice; and they saw again the varied pictures of Venice and Messina and Illyria, all the colours and movement which had made some of the most perfect illusions of their lives.

When the idea of giving a public banquet to Mr. Irving before his departure from America was mooted, there was no difficulty in obtaining the support of eminent men. Over a hundred names were attached to the invitation, including those of Senator Evarts, Senator Bayard, Henry Ward Beecher, G. W. Curtes, Oliver Wardell Holmes, W. D. Howells, T. B. Aldrich, Goldwin Smith, Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, John McCullough, Mark Twain, Horace Furness, C. Daru, C. Depew, J. N. Osgood, and C. Dudley Warner. The form of the invitation to the banquet was very noteworthy: "Our citizens will be glad in this way to express their appreciation of the intellectual pleasure and instruction which they have derived, not only from your personal performances as the greatest of English actors, but from your admirable system of management, which has resulted in the most satisfactory representations in every detail that have been witnessed in this country." Such a testimony, backed by such a consensus of opinion, is one of the highest tributes ever paid to an actor. It was no formal and conventional feeling, no forced etiquette, fashion and ceremony, which induced such a body of men to lend all the weight of their character to make this judgment historic. The banquet admirably illustrated the spontaneous spirit of the whole movement. Ex-President Arthur was to have presided, but he was kept away by illness, and his place was perfectly filled by Senator Evarts. The Senator is in features more an antique Roman than an American, and when Mr. Irving said, "I am no orator as Brutus is," the allusion was exceptionally happy. Mr. Evarts has a reputation for making very able, but very long speeches, consisting of interminable sentences, yet his speech at the dinner was a model of brevity and epigram. "When again he came amongst us," said Mr. Evarts.

of Mr. Irving, "he came as a friend to friends, and has been here ever since as a friend among friends; and while he has been here in this little world of our country, all the world has been a stage, and every man and woman in it a playgoer to see him play." But nothing in the Senator's speech made greater impression than his description of the community of sentiment between England and America. "It is in this widespread and universal transfusion of thoughts, of ideas, feelings and affections, that nothing is provincial any more, nothing central; but all English people everywhere surround the world with their speech, their laws, their literature, and their admiration, and wherever a man speaks English to English hearers, he is and speaks at home." Mr. Irving touched upon the same idea with the playful remark that, in spite of the constant exchange of small shot in the shape of jest and epigram between England and America, whenever an alien attacked English institutions, Americans were "pretty prompt to wipe the floor with him." This is one of the most expressive of the idioms which are racy of American soil. One of the points in Mr. Irving's speech was his humorous contrast between the compliment paid to him and the "testimonial" which, according to the old statute law of England, an actor was liable to receive in the shape of a public whipping. "That was what might be called the benefit performance of the period." To the sentiment of gratitude for all the kindness which he had received from America Mr. Irving gave emphatic utterance. "I express Ellen Terry's feelings as well as my own when I tell you that we shall sail from your shores to-morrow morning with hearts full of grateful affection for the American people, and with the conviction that the honours you have heaped upon us will be a precious heritage to those who are nearest and dearest to us. I have no better wish than that you should say of me what Rufus Choute said of great Americans: 'Dearly he loved you, for he was grateful for the open arms with which you welcomed the stranger and sent him onwards and upwards.'" This sentiment, delivered with much emotion, was received with the greatest enthusiasm.

Then came Mr. Beecher, and it was impossible to listen to him for three minutes without understanding his pre-eminence as an orator amongst his countrymen. His good sense, his wit, his command of simple forcible English, and the ease and spontaneity with which he rises to eloquence, are characteristics which give him

a perfect command of any audience. What could be more incisive than this? "One real man in a generation is worth forty thousand orations about manhood. One thoroughly good picture is worth all the gabble of annual addresses about art. One thoroughly good representation of the mimic art by a real company sets the argument for histrionic art further along than all the talk in the world." The function of the actor, said Mr. Beecher, was to make the sculptured marble of dramatic literature live and move. Then he uttered one of those vivid, pregnant sentences which are remembered because they crystallize the emotions of everybody. "I shall read Ophelia and see Ellen Terry as long as I live." Towards Mr. Irving he had the feeling which came to him in autumn when the birds were gone, and he did not know whether he should ever hear their song again. This touching sentiment closed a speech which was one of the most impressive tributes to dramatic art ever uttered or written. It gave that kind of satisfaction which Mr. William Winter expressed in the poetical address to Henry Irving, which was a striking incident of the evening:

> If not the torrid diamond wave that made young life sublime,
> If not the tropic rose that bloomed in every track of time,
> If not exultant passion's joy when all the world was fair,
> At least one flash of heaven, one breath of art's immortal air!

To every man in that assembly at Delmonico's, the evening of April 6, 1885, will ever be memorable. No expression of enthusiastic admiration and friendly regard for a public man could have been more perfectly designed. There was nothing laboured, nothing tedious; when the last word was spoken and the charm was dissolved, one wondered at the lapse of time. And this is true of the whole of Mr. Irving's tour in America. Now it is over, it seems like a dream that so much has been done in so short a space, that so many cities have been visited, such distances traversed, such a multitude of minds filled with delightful memories. What a legacy of earnest purpose and high achievement Mr. Irving has left to the American stage no English writer need describe. Americans are eloquent in the acknowledgment of their obligation. Their theatrical managers are learning that public intelligence requires a greater completeness and more liberal taste in the presentation of plays than have hitherto distinguished the American theatre. One manager in the West is determined to have models of scenery and appointments designed in London, to organize a

powerful company, and to travel through the States with a play that shall be completely represented in every particular. This spirit is admirable, and when it is widely diffused the result must be fraught with the highest benefit to the drama in America.

But the obligation is not all on one side. Mr. Irving returns home enriched, not merely in a material sense, but with the precious possession of many friendships and much experience. You cannot spend several months in a great country like America without a widening of ideas that is very useful to what some censors of English manners call the insular intelligence. There are certain native British prejudices which need the wholesome chastening of a contact with the unconventional customs of our American cousins. It is not possible to admire everything one sees in the States, and there are still one or two persons of the Jefferson Brick order, who resent even the gentlest criticism of American institutions; but the general atmosphere of society over the ocean is too breezy to tolerate small patriotic vapours. Intelligent Americans have travelled too much to be case-bound in admiration of their own country, and are too good-humoured to belabour the visitor even when they do not accept his strictures. Mr. Irving has said much in recognition of American courtesy and generosity; but what he has said with all the fulness of grateful acknowledgment in no degree exceeds the measure of the truth. For refined sympathy, for true tolerance, for constant solicitude, for that open-hearted frankness which thaws the most frigid etiquette, Americans have a sure title to the undying regard of all who have been received into the intimacy of their homes. None of those who stood with Mr. Irving and Miss Terry on the deck of the *Arizona*, while the figures of the friends who waved a last farewell from the quay gradually faded from sight, will ever lose from their hearts the echo of the cheers which seemed like a breath of "immortal air" wafting them on their homeward way. And while they live, and for their children after them, the pledge which knits their souls with memories of all that is noblest will ever be—

> To our kinsmen in the West, dear friends,
> And the great name of England round and round!

# Our Musical-Box.

## "FRANÇOIS THE RADICAL."

Comic Opera, in Three Acts. Produced at the Royalty Theatre, on Saturday, April 4, 1885.

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| The Marquis de Pontcornet ... ... | Mr. Henry Ashley. | Melitza ... ... ... | Miss Joan Rivers. |
| François ... ... ... | Mr. Deane Brand. | Nicolet ... ... ... | Miss Clara Graham. |
| Chevalier de Lansac | Mr. Henry Hallam. | Juliette ... ... ... | Miss Bertie Venn. |
| Kirschwasser... ... | Mr. Louis Kelleher. | Manon ... ... ... | Miss Montague. |
| Jasmin ... ... ... | Mr. George Honey | Ninette ... ... ... | Miss De Rothe. |
| Courtelan ... ... | Mr. H. St. Demain. | Pierre ... ... ... | Miss McKie. |
| Gratinet ... ... ... | Mr. E. T. Hodges. | Jules ... ... ... | Miss F. Deane. |
| Countess... ... ... | Miss Lizzie Mulholland. | Fanchon ... ... ... | Miss Kate Santley. |

IT is indeed a great pity that the talented adapter of the libretto of "François the Radical" from the French did not take the trouble to strengthen the plot of that work—to the extent, at least, of imparting some slight coherency to its incidents and a semblance of human interest to its characters—for M. Bernicat's music, if not strikingly original, is far cleverer and prettier than that of more than one modern operetta which has achieved popularity in this country of late years, and proved highly remunerative to its author, composer, and producer alike. If Mr. M'Carthy had bestowed half the ingenuity and pains upon reconstructing the story of "François the Radical," in such sort as to render it moderately intelligible, that he has lavished upon larding his dialogue with humorous word-plays and laughter-moving anachronisms, he would have endowed his adaptation with sufficient vitality to enable it to keep the stage throughout the approaching London season. As it is, if the piece be withdrawn before it shall have earned the cost of its production—which appears to be not improbable—the weight of responsibility for its lack of success will be attributable to the "book," rather than to the music or the performance. Absolute topsyturvydom, like that of Mr. Gilbert, whose characters all belonging to an impossible world of his own imagining, refreshingly emancipate from "the unities," and peopled by waggish lunatics, is not only amusing, but interesting to boot; for it teems with quaint intellectual puzzles and surprising incongruities, so subtly propounded that they engage the attention and captivate the fancy. But half-and-half topsyturvydom, such as that which pervades the English libretto of "François the Radical" (the very title is a barbarism) only produces in every intelligent mind that sort of uneasiness which rapidly develops into antagonism. An episode of the great French Revolution treated as a vehicle for the putting forward of allusions to English political differences of the present day, of local pleasantries, and of slangy London jokes, is a monstrosity, full of offence to the judicious, and not particularly entertaining to the average playgoer. The more carefully such a work is mounted, as far as its scenery, costumes, and accessories are concerned, the more painfully every chronological outrage perpetrated in the dialogue jars upon the nerves of the audience.

There are several charming musical numbers in "François the Radical,"

which were received with marked favour by a critical audience on the occasion of the operetta's production. The *cachet* of the melodies throughout the work, curiously enough, is conspicuously English, and in several instances refreshingly old-fashioned, conveying to the memory faint reminders of Henry Carey, Dr. Arne, and Sir Henry Bishop. Two or three of the tunes, again, might have been written by Balfe, so plain and unvarnished are the musical tales they tell. It is difficult to believe that such unsophisticated airs should have been composed by a cotemporary Frenchman. One song, allotted to a French countess of the *ancien régime*, is as distinctly Scottish in character as "Tullochgorum" or "The Laird o' Cockpen," and Mr. M'Carthy, yielding for once to his sense of the fitness of things, has supplied it with words that many a "fause Southron" might be excused for attributing to Burns. With characteristic Caledonian chirpiness, "hoddy-doddy" (whatever that may mean) rhymes with "tidy body," and irresistibly suggests "whiskey-toddy." This song, to fulfil the promise of its opening verbal and musical phrases, should wind up with a foursome reel and a blast of the great Hieland bagpipe. If the Countess had, whilst singing it, suddenly shed her short-waisted *sacque*, after the manner of the ladies who perform the transformation act on the bare-backed steed, and appeared in a kilt and sporran, few of the audience, I fancy, would have been surprised. "The Little Sailor" is an admirable song, supplemented by a no less admirable chorus; one of the most spontaneous and spirited pieces of musical fun I have heard for many a day. A chorus for female voices, "Take these roses" (act i.), combines two charming subjects in a singularly skilful and agreeable manner. Two duets for the hero and heroine, "The Writing Lesson" and "Seems our sorrow," would do credit to a work of far higher pretensions to operatic rank than "François the Radical." In conception and construction alike they are beautiful, and conclusively prove the geniality and gracefulness of the musical talent of which the lyric drama has been bereft by M. Bernicat's premature decease.

Miss Kate Santley, as Fanchon, the street-singer of patrician extraction, sang and acted with her customary cleverness and *verve*. Her accomplished vocalization was displayed to great advantage in the more florid passages of the music assigned to her, and her intonation was uniformly correct. She contrived, by sheer high spirits, to carry off certain ponderous absurdities with which her part was overweighted, and which might well have crushed an artist of less vivacious and elastic temperament. Mr. Ashley, although burdened with a rôle utterly unworthy of his brilliant talents, contrived to secure the sympathies of his audience early in the performance, and to retain them throughout the evening, as, indeed, he invariably does. Whenever he was on the stage he kept the house in a good-humour; and, but for his sprightly "gagging," the part of M. de Pontcornet would have been provocative of yawns rather than laughter. Mr. Ashley, however, nothing discomfited by the circumstance that he had omitted to learn his "words," rattled off his own personal inspirations with infinite liveliness and point, to the great entertainment of all present. The musical success of the occasion was certainly achieved by Mr. Deane

Brand, whose pure, sweet voice and refined singing fully merited the warm applause by which their excellent qualities were repeatedly acknowledged. Mr. Hallam also sang extremely well. Of the remaining "principals" perhaps the less said the better. I can cordially praise the chorus-singing, which of late years has become a leading feature of the operatic entertainments given in minor London theatres, and may safely challenge competition throughout Germany and France. The Royalty orchestra is a good one; but its able conductor is too apt to indulge it in *fortissimi* that are a thought over-boisterous for so small a house. In conclusion, I may be permitted to express my conviction that, musically considered, "François the Radical" contains such an abundance of downright good stuff that it may still establish itself firmly in public favour; on condition, however, that its plot and dialogue shall undergo certain indispensable reforms—lacking which, its destiny may be foretold without the aid of any special prophetic inspiration.

## "NADESHDA."

An Opera, in Four Acts, written and composed for the Carl Rosa Opera Company, by Julian Sturgis and A. Goring Thomas. Produced for the first time at Drury Lane, on Thursday, April 16, 1885.

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| Nadeshda ... ... Madame Alwina Valleria | Ivan ... ... ... ... Mr. Leslie Crotty. |
| Princess Natalia... Miss Josephine Yorke. | Ostap ... ... ... ... Mr. W. H. Burgon. |
| Voldemar ... ... Mr. Barton McGuckin. | |

"Nadeshda" is a valuable addition to the *répertoire* of the Carl Rosa Company, and an important recruit to the somewhat slender ranks of English Grand Opera. Without in the least undervaluing the many and attractive merits of "Esmeralda," which proved its composer to be an able and agreeable writer for the lyric stage, I cannot but recognise in "Nadeshda" a work in almost every respect superior to its predecessor. It is constructed upon broader lines and with more enduring material; it displays a marked development in its composer's faculty of dramatic expression; in a word, it exhibits increment of power, and a more comprehensive grasp of the resources of his art than Mr. Thomas has heretofore been credited with, even by his most sincere admirers. "Nadeshda," although the work of an Englishman, is not an oratorio, a sacred cantata, or a string of tuneful, commonplace ballads, binding together numerous fragments of dull dialogue; but a genuine opera, teeming throughout with musical beauty and interest, all the parts of which stand in natural relation to one another, and therefore constitute a homogeneous whole. Neither does it reveal, as did "Esmeralda," a self-effacement on the part of its composer in favour of his pet musical idols, such as is incompatible with the full display of whatever creative power he himself may be gifted with by nature. "Nadeshda" does not reek of Mr. Thomas's French master and name-brother; nor do its harmonic transitions and resolutions incessantly remind one of Gounod's delightful mannerisms. It is a far more independent work than "Esmeralda," and reveals its composer's real individuality, acquaintance with which every intelligent musician will find

worth cultivating. It abounds in melody rather than in melodies: but its *motivi* are at least confided to human voices, not to the orchestra, which is judiciously restricted to the functions assigned to it by the greatest opera-writers of præ-Wagnerian days. Mr. Thomas's inspirations are prevalently tuneful; his instincts—fortunately for himself and the English public, whose fondness for organic melody is congenital and ineradicable—prompt him to express his musical notions in an orderly and eminently intelligible manner. Whenever he is tempted to vary his method, and to lapse into rhythmical vagaries—such as compound triple times, for which he obviously entertains an ungovernable predilection—his phrases at once lose that refreshing spontaneity that, as a rule, is their most attractive characteristic. In justice to Mr. Thomas I must admit that he does not often sin in this direction; but indefiniteness of rhythm, especially in vocal music, is so "rank an offence" that he would do well to "reform it altogether."

The action of "Nadeshda" is melodramatic; strong "situations" are plentiful, and have, on the whole, been dealt with satisfactorily by librettist and composer alike. Mr. Sturgis's share in the opera deserves honourable mention. Although his versification is sometimes rugged, his lines are for the most part forcible and to the point. As many of them are written for theatrical peasants, their author is entitled to no inconsiderable credit for keeping them free from the mawkishness that traditionally pervades the utterances of the average operatic bumpkin. The story that Mr. Sturgis has to tell may be summed in a few brief sentences. Two brother boyards and a male serf are in love with a female serf, who, for her part, is possessed by a sentimental attachment to a river, which in the course of the piece she transfers to the elder boyard—not the river, of which he is already the proprietor, but the affection. The boyards have a mother of the proud and haughty persuasion, who gives her estates to her eldest son in the first act, absolutely and for ever, and not only takes them back later on in the piece, but proposes to kick him into the street without a copeck in his pocket wherewith to purchase a tot of vodki. How she does this is not explained—some subtle turn of the Russian law concerning deeds of gift, I suppose. Need I say that her motive for going back on the disposition she has made of her property as aforesaid lies in the circumstance that her first-born, after setting free the female serf whom he, his brother, and the male serf—an advanced Radical, whose political principles and handiness with the knife inspire him with a deep and ardent longing to ventilate the stomachs of his employers throughout the opera—are smitten with, resolves to marry her. His brother's views with regard to the emancipated bondswoman are less orthodox, though more usual, from the Russian point of view; an endeavour to carry them out gives the lethal serf an opportunity of ripping up one of his proprietors, which he does with sparkling promptitude, subsequently performing the Happy Despatch upon himself, in order to avoid further complications. Both the disagreeable characters of the story having been thus judiciously eliminated, the old lady sees the error of her ways, re-conveys her property to her virtuous son, and pronounces a tardy but pantomimic blessing upon him and the virtuous chambermaid of his choice.

This seems unlikely; but not more so, perhaps, than the *dénouements* of the majority of operatic *libretti*.

The musical gem of the opera is the ballet-music in the second act, than which nothing more quaintly pretty has been written for many a year, even by Léo Délibes. It will be remembered that Mr. Thomas made a decided hit with his charming dances in "Esmeralda." He has surpassed that undeniable success in "Nadeshda" by an episode of blended song and dance that is good enough to make the fortune of any opera. In sturdy contrast to the *soli* assigned to the tenor, which are rather thin and finely spun-out, are two exceptionally robust and characteristic bass-songs delivered respectively by the immoral boyard and the surgical serf, under the titles of "Our sires were stout" (it struck me that their descendants were tolerably burly for these degenerate days), and "Go, put your hand in new-lit fire," an exhortation which, I am bound to say, not one of the supers to whom it was addressed made any effort to comply with. Nadeshda's music is uniformly melodious and cleverly written, but exercises far too heavy a strain upon the resources of even so heroic a soprano as Madame Valleria, who wrestles valiantly with and overcomes the difficulties of a part which will certainly be tackled in Germany by Rosa Sucher—I venture to prognosticate, with shining success—but which no Italian prima-donna of my acquaintance would risk her voice by undertaking. "Nadeshda" could not, indeed, have been better cast throughout than it has been by Mr. Rosa. There was absolutely no fault to find with the vocal performance on the night of the opera's production. More than ever in the part of Voldemar does Mr. McGuckin fulfil the prediction I uttered *à son adresse* in this magazine four years ago. I am extremely obliged to him for so doing; and so is the public. Mr. Crotty sang and acted quite admirably as Ivan, the baddish boyard who, however, makes an edifying end of it to chords that vaguely remind one of the introductions to "Lohengrin" and "A Midsummer's Night's Dream." Nothing could be better than Miss Yorke in the character of Princess Natalia, one of the most unpleasant old theatrical mothers I ever remember to have met; and Mr. Burgon greatly distinguished himself as Ostap, the ill-conditioned phlebotomist of whose demise the audience would be glad to hear somewhat earlier in the evening. That relief is too long postponed. So is the conclusion of the opera. "Nadeshda" wants pruning with courage and freedom, if it is to be fully exonerated from the charge of tiresomeness. It is all good, I admit; but one may have too much of a good thing. Mr. Rosa has produced it with his customary taste and splendour; Mr. Harris has stage-managed it, which is equivalent to saying that it can give points, in that direction, to any work brought out by the Intendants of the great Continental opera-houses; Signor Randegger leads the orchestra in the masterly way that has so often obtained recognition in these pages; and, finally, the chorus-singing is beyond praise. "Nadeshda" has turned out a great, real, and legitimate success; and I should like my friends the Germans, who delight in undervaluing the achievements of English composers, to point out any one of their living fellow-countrymen who is capable of creating an opera half as tuneful, pleasing and effective as this

work by Mr. Arthur Goring Thomas—a musician of whom Englishmen are justly proud. To Mr. Rosa, too, our thanks are due for his share in enriching the national operatic *répertoire* with so valuable a musical gem. It is a comfortable reflection that, to composer and impresario alike, public gratitude will certainly, in the case of "Nadeshda," assume the form of solid pecuniary reward; for the opera is sure to "run" and to draw crowded houses.

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

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I had scarcely closed my musical budget for the last number of The Theatre when the sad intelligence of James William Davison's death reached me. In him this country has lost the founder of its school of musical criticism, journalism one of its brightest lights, and the Bohemia of art and letters a potent magnate, whose masterful but kindly sway was unreservedly ackowledged by many a man of scarcely less weight and influence than himself. It is not too much to say of Mr. Davison that—during at least twenty years of his career as a writer—he was the most influential and distinguished musical critic in Europe; or that his utterances in the columns of the *Times* had greater weight with composers and executant artists than those of Fétis, Hanslick, or even Berlioz himself. As far as this country is concerned, I am convinced that no journalistic specialist ever wielded such power as he, or was so directly instrumental in stimulating and moulding public taste. Until the representative English journal, with the singular felicity that formerly characterized its choice of instruments, made Mr. Davison its mouthpiece in relation to the musical art, serious and knowledgable criticism of compositions and performances was all but unknown to British newspaper readers. Productions of the highest artistic interest found no mention in the columns of the daily press, or, at best, were dealt with in a few lines of ordinary "reporting," the literary level of which was seldom higher than that of average penny-a-lining. The leading metropolitan journals appeared to regard music as a minor amusement, a *passe-temps*, less worthy of consideration and comment than a lively prize-fight or a dull debate. Mr. Davison revolutionized the views of newspaper proprietors, and of their great patron, the British public, in this regard. Supply, in his case, generated demand. Profoundly acquainted with the art of which he treated, he dressed his ripe learning up in such attractive garments of elegant style, sparkling wit, and quaint fancy that his musical notices—many of them essays that would have done credit to the princes of English *belles-lettres*—became one of the chief attractions of the puissant journal which he served so loyally and devotedly for thirty years—the best ones—of his life.

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Other and abler pens than mine have paid apt and eloquent tribute to the shining literary gifts and feats of James William Davison, the erudite musician, sagacious critic and inimitable *feuilletoniste*. I crave the permission of my friend the editor of The Theatre, who knew and valued the dead man well, to say a few words in this place about "Jimmy" Davison, the most delightful conversationalist, genial companion and

staunch comrade with whom it was ever my good fortune to associate intimately. In this view of his character and capacities a thousand men of light and leading will bear me out; for, in the world of literature and the arts, he knew everybody worth knowing, and to know him was at once to admire and love him. When I first made his acquaintance, in the days of the Crimean War, he was already a personage, an authority, a power; whilst I was merely an eager and ambitious lad, chafing under the red-tapism of a Government office and burning to achieve some sort of distinction—I knew not well what—in connection with the art of music, which I had assiduously cultivated, though to little practical purpose, from my childhood's early days. To be presented to the great *Times* critic, for whose writings I entertained the profoundest veneration, was a privilege to which I had aspired, but in vain, for some months, when it was unexpectedly conferred upon me by the true friend to whose sympathy and encouragement I already owed an engagement—my first one—as musical critic on a London weekly paper; Sterndale Bennett, who said to me one day, at a musical party, after glancing at one of my notices of a concert given by him in the Hanover Square Rooms, "Davison is at the top of the critical tree, and you are only just beginning to climb it; but I think I may venture to introduce you to him as a possible colleague. So come along, and don't collapse altogether if he snubs you." I obeyed, half joyful, half afraid, and was duly presented. Luckily for me, Davison (as he has often told me in later years) took a fancy to me. As was his wont, he found a nickname for me at once—young David—because I was "of a ruddy countenance." Then and there he made me free of his rooms in Percy Street, the afternoon rendezvous of all the eminent foreign musicians who happened to be in London, and of many a native celebrity to boot; and I well remember that, during my first visit, he made me play a prelude and fugue of Bach to a crowd of musical and literary notables, amongst whom were Jullien, Vivier, Albert Smith, Charles Kenney, and Morgan John O'Connell.

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From that time to the day of his death I was allowed to claim the record of my name upon the list of his personal friends. In 1857 I left England, and thenceforth, until the close of 1878, only visited London, for a few days or weeks at a stretch, half a dozen times in the course of twenty-one years. But whenever I did so I hunted up "Jimmy" Davison in one or other of his old haunts, and was welcomed by him "back to the fold" with unabated cordiality. Then would he joyfully add to the number of Noctes Ambrosianæ we had spent in each other's company and with kindred spirits; I never knew his equal for turning night into day. No matter what fatigues he had undergone or how much work was hanging over his head; if a man after his own heart was to the fore, "Jimmy" would sit up with him till the small hours grew big, never suffering the conversation to flag, or checking the flow of his inexhaustible resources of learning, humour and memory. During the Beethoven Centenary Festival at Bonn, in 1871, I was staying at the hôtel in which he, too, had rooms, and—throughout the week—never succeeded in getting to bed before six A.M., so irresistible was the fascination of his brilliant talk. Four years

later, at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, I spent a brief but never-to-be-forgotten holiday with him and his brother Duncan, whose affection for him amounted almost to worship; and we "made much music" together in the private apartments of Theodore Drexel, the amiable proprietor of the Russischer Hof, who held Davison in such high esteem that he submitted himself and his establishment completely to "Jimmy's" sway. It was during that pleasant vacation—abruptly terminated, as far as I was concerned, by my sudden despatch to the scene of the Herzegovinian insurrection—that Davison made the acquaintance of a talented young professor of chemistry (Heinrich Doer) whom he subsequently immortalized in the *Musical World* as "The Whistling Doctor." Doer was, indeed, a surprisingly sweet and skilful whistler, and Davison delighted in accompanying on the pianoforte his renderings of elaborate Italian *arie*, which were characterized by faultless execution of the most difficult *fioriture* passages. What a merry time we passed at that kindly hostelry, the best—we all agreed—in Europe! What delightful excursions we made to hill and forest nooks in the Taunus region! How we fought humorous battles over Wagner, and made up our comic quarrels over Mozart! What an inimitable companion he was, gifted with the keenest perception of all that was beautiful in Nature and Art, and with the rare faculty of reproducing his impressions in the most pregnant and picturesque language! Alas! all that now remains of him to his countless friends and admirers is the remembrance of his many noble talents and sweet qualities, and the hope that we may, at some time past, have been worthy of a place in his regard.

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Under the title of "Voice, Use and Stimulants," Mr. Lennox-Browne has just published an interesting and valuable essay upon the effects produced upon the human voice—or rather, upon the organs employed in voice-production—by alcohol and tobacco. In addition to the results of the author's personal observation in the course of his long professional experience as a specialist for the treatment of affections of the throat and other vocal mechanisms, he offers to his readers a large number of important facts and opinions, which he has collected with infinite pains from no fewer than three hundred and eighty professional vocalists—non-abstainers as well as abstainers from stimulants—and from which he derives the conclusion, one of infinite moment to singers and students of singing all over the world, that alcohol and tobacco are unquestionably injurious to the vocal organs, when freely indulged in, and in no case beneficial thereto, however moderate be the measure of their consumption. It would appear to be established beyond a doubt that laryngitis and pharyngitis are both commonly superinduced by spirit-drinking and smoking to excess, and that alcohol acts on the nerves and muscles of the larynx in particular, as a direct poison, causing complete loss of voice (aphonia) through paralysis of the vocal muscles, not necessarily preceded by congestion or inflammation. Mr. Lennox-Browne eloquently and forcibly cautions all singers against taking any part in those fashionable entertainments of the day, smoking-concerts, which he denounces as "cruel" to the voice and generally deleterious to the health of vocalists as well as to that of their

audiences. Amongst other curious *ana* contained in this singularly able and instructive treatise are some hitherto unpublished and absolutely authentic details of Marie Malibran's career, habits and premature death, bearing more or less direct relation to the subject dealt with by Mr. Lennox-Browne, whose lucid little book should be carefully read and laid to heart by every aspirant to renown, or even average success, as a vocalist.

# Our Play-Box.

## "UNDER FIRE."

A New and Original Comedy, in Three Acts, by Westland Marston. Produced at the Vaudeville Theatre, on Wednesday, April 1, 1885.

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| Guy Morton ... ... | Mr. Thomas Thorne. | Perkins ... ... ... | Mr. Powell. |
| Wynford Ormsby ... | Mr. Sugden. | Lady Fareham ... ... | Miss Amy Roselle. |
| Charles Wolverley ... | Mr. F. Archer. | Caroline Fareham ... | Miss Cissy Grahame. |
| Hon. Claud Doyle ... | Mr. Yorke Stevens. | Miss Amaranth ... ... | Miss Le Thière. |
| M. Bellecourville ... | Mr. Fred Thorne. | Miss Louisa Linwood | Miss Kate Phillips. |
| Watson... ... ... ... | Mr. Austin. | Mrs. Naylor ... ... | Mrs. Canninge. |

IT is sincerely to be hoped that in the bitterness of spirit which the failure of his comedy must naturally have engendered, Dr. Westland Marston may have found some solace in his own platonic words—those placed in the mouth of one of the characters in the ill-fated play. If I remember rightly, it was Charles Wolverley, the literary aspirant, who is made to say, "*Success is something, but it is not all.*" In "Under Fire" the author had much to be proud of, nothing to be ashamed of. None the less, it must have been a great disappointment to him, who in his time has earned so many laurels, to have been denied yet one wreath more. With his disappointment all will sympathize.

But, with due respect to the veteran dramatist, I would remind him how many an able and experienced general, the victor of a hundred fields, has by some strange oversight, perchance neglect on his own part, at last allowed his foes an opportunity of which they have not been slow to take advantage. This parallel holds good to some extent, but not throughout. Westland Marston's latest ambition, "Under Fire," has been brought to perish, but not at the hands of enemies. Never did a more friendly or sympathetic audience assemble to welcome back a favourite hero than that which met within the Vaudeville Theatre on April 1. With keen interest and generous hope they came to witness the presentation of a new play by a playwright who, half a century ago, whilst yet a boy, made his name known to the world as the author of "The Patrician's Daughter." They came with praise impatient on their lips; they saw with eyes that beamed indulgence; they went away with hearts full of regret that success had not been achieved. And what, it will be asked, was the cause of this catastrophe? Was it because Westland Marston had lagged behind the times and now offered us—a faster and more fastidious generation—a feast

that would have pleased the palates of earlier playgoers? Hardly so. There was little if anything in either the diction or construction of the new comedy which smacked of the antique: no high-flown phrases; no stately minuets of speech; no bow-and-curtsey manners which our proud sires considered courteous, but we, alas! call flunkyism. The author had clothed his men and women in garments of the latest *mode;* their conversation, if not particularly brilliant, was at least sufficiently touched with caustic cynicism and rude repartee to keep pace with the most advanced school of wits and epigrammatists. The details, indeed, were all in harmony with the picture of society—as represented on the stage—in this year of grace 1885. Why then was the play condemned? Was it not because its story, founded upon an absurdly weak motive, was over-elaborated told in a tardy, complicated manner, and intruded upon by characters who had nothing whatever to do with the plot or its *dénouement*, but rather helped to drag the piece, and so to worry, weary, and perplex the audience? In short, may not it be truly said of "Under Fire," that it was too inartistic to please—too unnatural to live? The story of this unhappy play has been told again and again *ad nauseam*, and it could serve no purpose here to do more than refer for a moment to its leading feature—that of a woman whose one idea of happiness is social success, and who, in altogether unnecessary dread of losing it, is ready to sacrifice all else—even her only child's happiness—thus earning for herself the scorn and contempt which no previous act of hers has been shown to merit. To represent this foolish and far too imaginative character, Miss Amy Roselle had truly a thankless task. Be it all the more to the praise of that clever actress that she succeeded in making Lady Fareham appear, for the nonce, a living possibility. Without dwelling upon special points, which space forbids, I would pronounce Miss Roselle's acting throughout to have been of the highest and most conscientious art. The best drawn character in the play—that of Mrs. Naylor, the adventuress, upon whom Lady Fareham's destiny has too long been allowed to depend—was admirably sustained by Mrs. Canninge, who here showed herself to be one of doubtless many clever actresses who only want the opportunity to prove that they can act. Miss Cissy Grahame was weak, but winsome, as Caroline Fareham. Miss Le Thière was unwelcome in a part which few could have made welcome; whilst Miss Kate Phillips as Miss Louisa Linwood—a young lady who had no business there at all—made herself more agreeable to the audience than to her rude young sweetheart, the Hon. Claud Doyle, well played by Mr. Yorke Stevens. Mr. F. Archer's was a very finished performance, and certainly earned as much sympathy as it was possible to accord to such a negative being as Charles Wolverley. Mr. Sugden gave an amusing sketch of a youth whose mind was more apt than his mouth. Mr. F. Thorne satisfactorily filled the small but highly coloured character-part of the French theatre-manager; and, lastly, the worthy lessee, Mr. Thomas Thorne, did all that his ability could do in a rôle for which he was ill fitted. Mr. Thorne could not be bad in any part; but as the heavy, loutish, sentimental yeoman, Guy Morton, he could not be very good.

Cunningham Bridgman.

## "THE LAST CHANCE."

A New and Original Drama, in Five Acts, by George R. Sims. Produced at the Adelphi Theatre, on Saturday, April 4, 1885.

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| Frank Daryll ... ... | Mr. Charles Warner. | Picot ... .. ... ... | Mr. E. Travers. |
| James Barton ... ... | Mr. James Fernandez. | Detective Officer... ... | Mr. E. R. Fitzdavis. |
| Richard Daryll ... ... | Mr. George Warde. | Marion Lisle ... ... | Miss Louise Moodie. |
| Rupert Lisle ... ... | Mr. Charles Glenny. | Mary Barton ... ... | Miss Mary Rorke. |
| Christmas Day ... ... | Mr. E. W. Garden. | Nelly Peters ... ... | Miss Nelly Lyons. |
| Lawyer West ... ... | Mr. J. G. Shore. | Mrs. Peters ... ... ... | Mrs. H. Leigh. |
| Bob Rawlings ... ... | Mr. Sidney Howard. | Mrs. No. 22 ... ... ... | Miss Harriet Coveney. |
| Karasoff ... ... ... | Mr. J. D. Beveridge. | Mrs. Daryll ... ... ... | Miss Ellen Cowle. |
| Johnson... ... ... ... | Mr. H. Cooper. | Mrs. Moriarty ... ... | Mrs. John Carter. |
| Dietrich... ... ... ... | Mr. E. A. Anson. | Madame Picot ... ... | Miss Mary Harlowe. |

Perplexing indeed is the case of the successful dramatist, with a reputation for artistic merit, who, working for such a theatre as the Adelphi, wishes to increase at one and the same time his fortune and his fame. If he chooses the "arduous path of observation and nature" which leads to his commendation by high-class criticism, he soon discovers that, unless his observation is superficial and his nature commonplace, it leads also to dwindling audiences and a diminishing exchequer. Presently, his manager says, "Look here, Mr. Highflyer—I don't run my theatre to please high-class critics, but to please the public. I keep a shop, and my object is to make money. Nobody appreciates your art and observation and nature more than I do, but I'd much rather appreciate them at somebody else's theatre. Good morning!" If, on the other hand, the playwright chooses "the broad road of convention," which leads to packed houses and overflowing coffers, down on him comes the sledge-hammer of the high-class critic, who calls him "Hercules—Meritt—Pettit—Harris," and other opprobrious names. Both gentlemen are right, from their respective points of view. If Mr. Sims were in the position of the critic, he would write in precisely the same strain; if the critic were in the position of Mr. Sims, either he would turn out precisely the same class of work or he would not be in Mr. Sims's position long. The fact is, a modern Adelphi drama is not so much a play as a huge and perfectly legitimate commercial venture; and the admirable standard of the high-class critic is inapplicable to the case. An Adelphi audience is a big, fat, over-grown, good-humoured baby, ready to laugh if you only tickle its toes, and equally ready to cry if you only pretend to cry yourself. It would be cruel to put between its "toothless gums"—to use an expression rendered classical by the Bayard of modern criticism—hard intellectual nuts. A baby it is, as a baby it should be treated, and as a baby Mr. Sims treats it.

Well enough known now is the story of stalwart Mr. Frank Daryll, who, having been defrauded of what of course turns out to be his rightful inheritance, is reduced to the enunciation of noble sentiments in all sorts of incongruous circumstances and on all kinds of inappropriate occasions. Even here the hand of the practical playwright is evident. Whomsoever Mr. Daryll is talking to, he is always addressing the Adelphi audience. This is bad art, but it is good artfulness. At the Haymarket it would be fatal; but Mr. Sims was not writing for the Haymarket. At any

other theatre Mr. Sims would have made Mr. Daryll implore his venerable, though rather weak-kneed parent, to "let his arm bear the burden," or "strike the blow." Writing for the Adelphi, Mr. Sims makes him implore his father to "let his *strong* arm bear the burden," and I have little doubt that the inartistic adjective will be worth in the long run quite ten pounds sterling to Messrs. Gatti. It is needless to relate how the robust youth, who is bamboozled and worsted by everybody he tackles, ultimately succumbs to a wanton and unprovoked assault by a pasteboard crane, worked on a patent silent system of its own—becomes mysteriously separated from his wife, and in the last act as mysteriously finds her. Here again I agree with Mr. Sims. Why bore the Adelphi audience with elaborate explanations, when all it wants is effect? At some theatres causes are necessary in order that effects may be produced; had Mr. Sims been writing for such theatres, the causes would have been made evident; but at the Adelphi effect is accepted without cause, and causes are a drag upon the action. Mr. Sims cuts them out, or at any rate cuts them very short, and his justification is the nightly return.

The early portion of the play is well-constructed and strong. The "formula of Scribe"—despised and rejected by the high-class critic—is substantially adopted. In the latter half the formula is cast aside, and the high-class critic is properly displeased, simply because—although he will not recognise the fact—the contemned formula is departed from. The resources of arithmetic are exhausted in the attempt to enumerate the superfluous characters, scenes, episodes and speeches. Accidents overbalance incidents, and principals play second-fiddle to subordinates. As soon as the threads of the story begin to intertwine, and one watches with interest the development of the pattern, the carpenter's whistle sounds, the trick-scenery changes, and one is plunged headlong into fresh matter. The play is continually kept waiting, whilst the author interpolates an entertainment or cleverly sketches an irrelevant character. The high-class critic is justly offended, but the Adelphi audience gets exactly what it wants. Whether or not this be the reason, the story, as I heard it the other night at the theatre, did not seem to be the story I heard months ago from the lips of its author. Told as a narrative, pointed by Mr. Sims's histrionic skill and emphasized by the force and fire of his personality, it struck me as a powerful, in parts a thrilling tale. Somehow the thrill has gone. I am driven to the conclusion that Mr. Sims, at home in the epic method, is not yet a past-master of dramatic form. I do not mean that there is about his work the slightest trace of amateurishness, but that his theatrical effects are not the equivalent of the effects which he would produce out of the same material in type. Moreover, I am persuaded that very elaborate and "realistic" mounting serves only to dwarf a play and to obscure the author's meaning.

Commercial undertakings such as "The Last Chance" afford little scope for acting. The musical voice and perfect accent of Miss Louise Moodie, and the pure tones, distinct articulation and refined ladyhood of Miss Mary Rorke, are the only strong impressions left upon my mind. Mr. Garden was amusing; but Mr. Fernandez, Mr. Beveridge and Mr. Glenny I scarcely recognized. Mr. Warner seemed to be everlastingly clutching, convulsively

and with the grim tenacity of desperation, at effects which were not in his part. He appeared to be yearning, hungering and thirsting to "let himself go," but there was nowhere for him to go. On this occasion the actors supported the scene-painters. For these gentlemen, if they had only remembered that, in painting, the part is sometimes greater than the whole, I should have had nothing but praise. The scenes are beautiful, the acting is adequate, and the play is the work of a most clever author and man of business.

Those who maintain that a high level of artistic excellence is not incompatible with a huge popular success, generally point to "The Silver King"—a play of which I shall always consider Mr. Sims part-author; for, had there been no "Lights o' London," "The Silver King" would not have existed—at any rate, in his present form. I am far from denying the compatibility of artistic merit and melodramatic success; though it is a conjunction we have no right to demand from any author. Still, I refuse to accept "The Silver King" as a witness. If that excellent melodrama be analysed, it will be discovered that its artistic merit and its moral tone lie chiefly in externals, and that its framework is conventional.

A dissolute vagabond flies from the country. Abroad, he meets a rich uncle in the shape of a silver mine, returns with boundless wealth, to clear his character and succour his starving wife and child. He is reclaimed by a severe mental shock, transfigured by the silver mine; becomes rich, turns respectable—does nothing. The beauty, the art, the tone of this most moving drama are all superadded: they are not of the essence of the plot. Messrs. Jones and Herman have hidden under a rich mantle of poetry and pathos the unheroic figure of their hero. They have taken a skeleton and put flesh on its bones. The flesh is living, but the bones are dead.

Still, though "The Silver King" has not demonstrated the paying power of a thoroughly unconventional melodrama, it has at least confirmed the proof afforded by "The Lights o' London" that, whilst the melodramatist follows generally the conventional route, he may with advantage wander a little from the beaten track into the broad green fields that lie on either hand and gather a few wild flowers as he goes. Mr. Sims has done this before, and he will do it again; but in "The Last Chance," the flowers are for the most part flowers of speech. Only here and there, out of the rank grass peeps a violet. That one line of the child in the hospital garden—"It was my father who broke my arm"—is worth all Mr. Frank Daryll's heroics; and when the public insists upon a higher type of melodrama, the author who wrote that line will rise to the occasion. Mr. Sims is pre-eminently a man of his time: he keeps pace with it, step for step, and would as little think of marching in front of it as of lagging behind it. He writes with one eye on his pen, the other on the market. He never kicks against the pricks, but quietly accepts the inevitable—and makes a fortune out of it. Amongst his many wonderful qualities, none is so marvellous as his Protean capacity of adapting himself to his opportunities. He neve attempts to alter circumstances: he patiently lets circumstances alter him. His genius rises and falls with the fluctuations of public taste, as gradually, as abruptly, as rationally, as inexplicably as prices on the Stock Exchange He can soar to extraordinary heights, he can descend to considerable depths; but, it is said, "he carries the public with him." A mistake. The

public carries Mr. Sims. If I were asked—*could* Mr. Sims write a really high-class melodrama for the Adelphi, supposing he were to try, I should say, no—because the Adelphi does not want a really high-class melodrama, and Mr. Sims is mentally incapable of producing what is not wanted. But the instant high-class melodrama becomes more profitable than low-class, the capacity to write it will be instantaneously developed in Mr. Sims; and there is no man alive who will recognise that instant with such precision. Mr. Sims is the mouthpiece of his audience: it applauds him with such sincerity—a sincerity sadly discounted by the artificial paroxysms of the Adelphi attendants—because, though it may not know it, it is really applauding itself. Mr. Sims writes not for posterity, but for his contemporaries—not for to-morrow, but for to-day—not for his critics, but for himself and for his managers. In whatever age he had been born, he would never have been a man either before or after his time; for he would have adapted himself to his epoch, or his epoch would have adapted him to itself. Herein is the whole secret of his phenomenal success. When his capacity to pipe is cramped by the incapacity of the public to dance, or by its insufficient remuneration of the piper, the fault is scarcely his. It is not the paramount duty of every man to be a reformer, to starve himself to enrich others, and to be crucified on the cross of malice and misunderstanding. Mr. Sims swims with the tide. Once let it set in the direction of a higher art, writers will not be wanting to supply the new demand; and I am much mistaken, if the name of one of them will not be George R. Sims.

Sydney Grundy.

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## "THE EXCURSION TRAIN."

A Farcical Comedy, in Three Acts, adapted from the French by the Author of the "Candidate" and W. Yardley. Produced at the Opéra Comique, on Easter Monday, April 6, 1885.

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| Aristides Cassegrain ... | Mr. David James. | Bambinello ... ... | Mr. F. W. Irish. |
| Ben Brisket ... ... ... | Mr. W. Lestocq. | Tancred ... ... ... | Mr. Cecil Rayne. |
| Narcisse Duval ... ... | Mr. E. W. Gardiner. | Agatha ... ... ... | Miss Cicely Richards. |
| Pompac ... ... ... ... | Mr. W. Scott Buist. | Madame Pinchard ... | Miss Robertha Erskine. |
| Loris... ... ... ... ... | Mr. S. Herbert. | Virginia ... ... ... | Miss Lucy Buckstone. |
| Bouchon ... ... ... ... | Mr. Leslie Corcoran. | Ophelia ... ... ... | Miss Helen Forsyth. |
| Ravioli ... ... ... ... | Mr. C. A. Smily. | | |

In undertaking to adapt "Le Train de Plaisir" to the English stage, the author of "The Candidate" and Mr. W. Yardley ventured upon a task of no slight difficulty and danger—one, indeed, that more experienced hands would hardly have dared attempt. Anything approaching a literal translation of MM. Hennequin et Cie.'s farce must have failed to pass the Examiner of Plays. The adapters were, therefore, compelled to excise from the original piece those scenes, motives, and situations which were its very sinews of success at the Palais Royal a year ago. Such an operation required the most skilful dramatic surgery to ensure survival. Unhappily this was not forthcoming, and the result has been—death.

The "Excursion Train," after a very short run, has been removed from the Opera Comique stage. It may seem rather out of order to pronounce judgment when sentence has already been executed. But there are lessons to be learnt by a retrospective view of deeds and doers, whilst calm consideration of the causes of past failure may help towards success in future efforts. In the present case, after all allowance has been made for the

hardship of the labour the authors set themselves, it is impossible honestly to commend any one feature of their workmanship. Nor is it easy to conceive how Mr. David James, with his great experience, could have chosen such a witless play wherewith to inaugurate his new managerial campaign. The adventures of Aristides Cassegrain and his young bride, and all the mishaps which befell them and their luckless fellow-excursionists at Monaco, were, it must be admitted, sufficiently comical to suit this risible age; but the situations were brought about in such a tardy and conglomerative manner that the audience had grown too weary to appreciate them fully when arrived at. After we have yawned and gaped for want of tickling throughout one whole act, and have been led into another without a sign of better amusement than that which a tableau of butcher's assistants with wedding gifts of marrow-bones and cleavers had been calculated to afford us, we find our faculty for laughter has become too dull to greet the players' dilatory humour. And then the dialogue throughout was not only wanting in wit, but, especially in act i., such as might have delighted transpontine playgoers of days gone by. Surely there was no reason why, because he had served a short apprenticeship to a Smithfield butcher, Aristides, the Batignolles *boucher*, should have remained so constant to the diction and manner of a Shoreditch meat-salesman. This may be dubbed English fastidiousness: be that as it may, it was the evident sense of the house from stalls to gallery. To all the incessant reference to chops, steaks, sheep's eyes, liver, tripe, &c., became intensely tedious—to use no stronger adjective. Doubtless, the frequent mention of these commodities appears less objectionable in the French, since Frenchmen have a clever way of cooking phrases as daintily as *fillets de bœuf*.

Such gratification as the "Excursion Train" afforded was chiefly due to the efforts of those who strove their utmost to keep it going. It was from no lack of spirit on their part—though now and then there was an awkward pause in the journey—that it failed to prove a train of pleasure. Mr. David James struggled bravely to support a part totally unbecoming his ability. As we gazed upon Aristides Cassegrain, we thought of Perkyn Middlewick and—wept. Better an ounce of the honest British butterman's "*real Dosset*," than the sweetest sweetbread of this vulgar-mouthed Batignolles butcher of the New-Cut type. The best part in the piece was that of Bambinello, the timidly brave and over-officious official of Monaco. Admirably was it filled by Mr. Fred. Irish. Nothing could have been in better taste and judgment than the performance of this capital comedian. Mr. Irish has been too long hidden away in the dusk of Lyceum farces. It may be hoped he will not be thrust back again, now that he has once more been brought to light. Mr. Lestocq's Ben Brisket was a well-coloured character-sketch. Mr. Gardiner was a spirited Narcisse Duval. Miss Erskine, as Madame Pinchard, had nothing better to do than strive to be coarse, which, to her credit, she hardly succeeded in being. Miss Lucy Buckstone looked pretty and, not unnaturally, disconsolate as the butcher's bride. Miss Cecily Richards was, as ever, artistic in a part distinct from those with which she has been hitherto associated. Miss Helen Forsyth's fresh, graceful, and ladylike acting as Ophelia was the chief oasis of refinement in a desert of vulgarity. The minor parts were adequately played.

Cunningham Bridgman.

# Our Omnibus-Box.

MR. WILSON BARRETT being both a successful and an amiable man, is the latest victim of the scurrilous paragraph-maker. Unable to worry him in any other fashion, his name, or the name of his acting manager, is deliberately forged as the publisher of anti-Irving paragraphs. Not a human being who knows Mr. Wilson Barrett, or understands his cordial relationship with Mr. Irving, believes one word of the rubbish that is written about him. But it suits envious and mischievous people to placard America with a tissue of abominable falsehoods. When this miserable trick fails, Mr. Wilson Barrett's name is again forged to a bogus invitation, supposed to be addressed to all the soldiers in London, asking them to come to the Princess's Theatre free, provided they present themselves in uniform. Envy, petty spite, and miserable jealousy are at the bottom of these wretched annoyances, deliberately aimed at a good-hearted and amiable man. Thank goodness the scent is keen, and it will not be long before the scoundrel is caught who has for months past been the instigator of these miserable devices to be-little a popular—and what is more—a successful man.

When the American paragraphs and the sham invitations have failed, some miserable sneak is sent round to the theatrical clubs to spread an utterly unfounded rumour to the effect that a business partnership exists between Mr. Wilson Barrett and a writer who has had the effrontery to uphold the cause of the poetic drama at a lecture delivered before the members of the "Playgoers Club," and has also dared to protest against the scurrilous and degrading prints that discredit the stage and dishonour the age in which we live.

These words then written and received with acclamation by the most earnest playgoers of our time, shall be reprinted here, for the writer is not ashamed of uttering them or afraid of repeating them :—

"You will ask me where I find this irreverent spirit, this fever for fun, this disturbing depreciation that retards the advance of the poetic drama? Alas! where do I not find it? In the stalls, where culture and literature are supposed to sit on a first night; at dinner parties, where the drama is discussed; at clubs, by those who seldom reflect on the danger of bad example; in the lower class of personal papers that interest themselves in the stage, and have done more harm to the drama than any innocent conspiracy of our time; in the papers that are encouraged to take up every scandal and to spread every falsehood that they can glean or invent about the stage, and that hinder the aims of all who are not scandalous and desire to be truthful—papers, I regret to say, that are greedily devoured by many who in their hearts detest them, and by many more who think worse of humanity when they have perused this aggregate mass

of buffoonery, blasphemy, and the refined cruelty of uncharitableness. But it is only just that I should add, this deplorable want of unity of endeavour, this absence of good fellowship, this failure in *esprit de corps* and courtesy and chivalry exists as much in my own profession as in any other, where every other man's hand in these days appears to be on his neighbour's throat, and almost every honest endeavour is translated into a mean motive."

Many a persecuted man before now has taken the trouble to contradict "a rumour," spread by a coward, repeated by an occasional fool and not believed in by one honest man. If we were all to busy ourselves in contradicting the "rumours" of the minor theatrical press, valuable time would be uselessly occupied. Time brings about its revenges and scandal-mongers are not saved from the fate that awaits them sooner or later. In these enlightened days a man invents a cock-and-bull story, takes the trouble to spread it, and then requires to be rewarded for suppressing it, or at any rate cringes and fawns until his "influence" is recognized. We all know what that means.

There is one simple way of punishing the systematic and scurrilous paragraphist. It has never been known to fail. The reckless fellow hiding behind a hedge week after week fires off his random shots. Sometimes they miss the target and sometimes they hit it. Meanwhile never fail to pick up the lead as evidence of a conspiracy of annoyance. When an innocent man's name is mentioned, accompanied by insulting and opprobrious epithets every week for years together, the ultimate jury is interested in the accumulated record of abuse. The time comes, sooner or later, when the scurrility or opprobrious epithets go just a little too far. Patience is exhausted. An action is brought, and the record of crime is extremely useful in the ultimate assessment of damages. This book of quotations if carefully kept up is as valuable as the grim catalogue of prior offences kept by a sessions officer and produced before a shivering prisoner is sentenced. Journalists who are systematically assailed by their jealous brethren will turn at last, and when they do turn they do not turn in vain. Smart newspaper editors who base vulgar and malignant articles on club rumours have come to grief before now. Give them rope enough, they will get strangled at last.

And after all is not abuse in certain journals the greatest compliment that can be paid to any one who has a grain of self-respect? Who would care to earn the encouragement or to be decorated with the patronage of such writers as do not hesitate to fling their vitriol in the face of two old ladies the dignity of whose age should surely protect them from cowardly insult? Is it possible that the dramatic profession is so destitute in chivalry or so wanting of decency as to applaud the wit that is levelled at two respected ladies whose talent was recognized before their assailant was born, and whose fame will be acknowledged long after he and his ribaldry are charitably forgotten.

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Bravo! *New York Mirror*, from which I clip the following remarks. They are as appropriate in London as in New York, and may well be taken to heart. I wonder, however, if the amenities of American journalism

"So, one fine day, I carried him off by train to Leamington, and married him there by special license."

LOOSE TILES.

*Kate Phillips*

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE," BY BARRAUD, 263 OXFORD STREET, W.

allow one journalist to call another "an ass" with impunity, or to concoct falsehoods in order to have the pleasure of descanting on them with ill-assumed virtue:—

"Report comes to us from London that in one of its leading theatres orders have been issued that 'such journals as those which fill their columns with false and indelicate theatrical tattle, and serve to bring the dramatic profession into disrepute, are not to be admitted to the green-room.' This seems to be in the right direction, and involves the important concession that if actors do not respect themselves they cannot long command the respect of others.

"It cannot be denied that in many of our own dramatic papers (so-called) a degree of license is employed toward professionals of the stage which would be regarded as scandalous if imposed on any other class of public characters.

"Nor are actors altogether free of censure for the part they sometimes take in lowering the grade of the noble art they profess. A marked indulgence in this direction is the gerrymandering with brother performers in view of the public, both when on the stage and in resorts where actors do most congregate.

"In a word, many who claim rank among theatrical artists do not always maintain the dignity and self-respect which becomes them. The reader will call to mind, no doubt, more than one specimen of buffoonery in the play entirely foreign to the purpose of the scene and derogatory to true dramatic effect.

"A most obvious means of correcting such departures from decorum as we refer to is to abate such journals as make it their business to exploit all the flagrancies and misdemeanours of actors, and make a market of every scandal that involves the name of actor or actress.

"Publications are made relative to the domestic life and private concernment of members of the theatre which are not only discreditable in themselves, but which have no right in the columns of any journal—least of all to such as are professedly devoted to the interests and welfare of the Stage.

"We ascribe not a little of the low condition of the drama and theatricals in certain directions to the diffusion of such vicious sheets and the encouragement of whatever 'tittle-tattle' belittles the professional character.

"A pure press and a pure drama go hand in hand, and strengthen each other in securing amusements which not only cheer but exalt the temper of the public."

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Miss Kate Phillips, whose photograph appears in this number, belongs to the Goldney family, which settled in Wiltshire as far back as the time of Henry II. She is a daughter of the late Mr. Phillip Goldney, of Bradleigh Hall, Essex, a mighty fox-hunter in his day. In early life, strange as it may seem, she found herself obliged to earn a living for herself, and for a time acted as a governess. This occupation found no favour in her eyes, and the applause she won in some amateur

dramatic performances led her to go on the stage. Her first appearance before the public was at the Lyceum Theatre, as a page in "Chilpéric." Enamoured of her new calling, she went into the provinces for practice, returning to London in 1871 to assume a part in "Les Brigands." She has since fulfilled engagements at most of the principal London theatres—notably, the Haymarket, Court, Prince of Wales's, St. James's, and Vaudeville. She is now in her fourth season at the latter house. She has played Gerda in "The White Pilgrim," Phœbe in "Paul Pry," the Boy in "Henry V.," Bessie Hebblethwaite in "An Unequal Match," Jenny in "The Queen's Shilling," and Maria in "Twelfth Night." Her most notable impersonations at the Vaudeville have been Lady Franklin in "Money," Lucy in "The Rivals," Maria in "Confusion," Lydia in "Saints and Sinners," Timpson in "Open House," and Lottie Clincker in "Loose Tiles." It is in the latter character that she has been photographed for THE THEATRE.

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Miss Tilbury, who is a daughter of Miss Lydia Thompson, made her first appearance at the Royalty Theatre in January, 1882, as Clotilda in the burlesque of "Pluto." She was then engaged by Mr. Bancroft for the Haymarket Theatre, where, from October 1882 to August 1883, she played various small parts. She then went to the Prince's Theatre, where she acted Azéma in "The Palace of Truth," Maud in "Six-and-Eightpence," Mary Vaughan in "Called Back," and Mary in "A Fireside Hamlet." The company then migrated to the Olympic Theatre, where Miss Tilbury appeared as the heroine of "Ruth's Romance." At the Comedy Theatre she has since appeared as Mrs. Percy Lennox in "Family Ties," Praline Patoche in "Nemesis," Mary in "Mary's Holiday," and in "Bad Boys," the adaptation of "Clara Soleil." At various times she has acted the following parts, in addition to those enumerated above:—Helen in "The Hunchback," Nelly in "Retiring," Kitty in "Happy Go Lucky," Nelly in "The Colonel," and Gerda in "The White Pilgrim."

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Mr. William Winter explains with such tact, emphasis and cleverness the artistic sympathy that exists between actor and critic, that I cannot do better than quote his words that occur in a speech delivered at the last Irving banquet in New York:—

"And just as there is acute sensibility in the artist, so there should be, and naturally and usually there is, a deep sympathy in the nature of the rightful and competent judges of art. When you have long and patiently studied an actor's intellectual constitution: when you have tried to fathom the depth of his feelings: when you have minutely traced and interpreted the beauty and the mystery of his art: when striving to live on his grand ideals of imaginative life you have been made to live a more exalted and glorious life of your own, it is natural, it is inevitable that you should become bound to him by ties of an affection as true, as deep, as strong, and as persistent as any that human nature can feel."

I commend these words to the many essayists, great and small, from the

"I wonder how I look in this position?"

RUTH'S ROMANCE.

Jessie Bilbury

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE," BY BARRAUD,
263 OXFORD STREET, W.

literary peer to the literary prig, who persistently endeavour in this country to ascribe this artistic sympathy to some mean motive, and protest that it could not exist if it were not flattered by some worldly consideration or stimulated by some degrading influence.

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The first London corps of Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers gave a most interesting entertainment, on Board H.M.S. *Rainbow*, towards the end of last month. As the performance was repeated six times, I elected to go on Friday, the 17th, this being the first really fine night, and the third of representation. From Waterloo Police Pier, the ship's boats, manned by six oars under the command of a C.P.O., rowed the guests to their destination, where they were received and placed by some of their hosts, attired in their smart sailors' uniforms. (I use the word smart in the military sense.) The interior of the *Rainbow* was lighted by electric light, this, as well as the scenery, appointments, everything in fact connected with the entertainment, being managed by the R.N.A.V. themselves. The "stalls" were soon overflowing, and the late spectators disposed themselves in picturesque groups, on every available sitting place; the guns being captured and defended with true earnestness. Many of the gentlemen had to stand the whole time; yet, so prevalent was the spirit of welcome and genial hospitality, that every one felt happy and content. There was a good show of bunting and arms in the way of decoration, and a painted drop-scene by a local artist. The scenery was very good, and the stage-management excellent, considering the restricted space. The ladies were professionals. Henry J. Byron's comedy, "War to the Knife," was first given, and went off perfectly smoothly. The best impersonation was the Hubbly of Gunner C. F. Fuller. The other parts were undertaken by C.P.O. A. W. Lowndes, 1st C.P.O. F. W. Jacks, 2nd C.P.O. D. H. Marrable, Sub-Lieut. Charles U. Jacks, and all did well. Miss Marie Undspeth was a vivacious young widow; and Miss Beatrice May interesting as the young wife, though wanting in earnestness in the second act. Miss Marie Bramah and Miss Maud Groves were good as the two maids. An interval for refreshment followed. Tea, bread and butter and cake, were handed to the ladies by the R.N.A.V., while the sterner sex were invited to go and refresh themselves in the cuddy, and go on deck to smoke, if they pleased. Then came the real event of the performance, "Sir Marigold the Dottie, or the Moonlight Knight," an original burlesque in one act, by Charles Frederic Fuller, one of the gunners, written especially by him for the R.N.A.V., and remarkably well acted by them. The burlesque is smartly written and exceedingly amusing. The author was good as Sir Marigold, but I liked him best in the first piece. Gunner Maitland H. Dicker, as Lady Angostura (his better half), was excellent and showed great capacity for byplay. 1st C.P.O. F. W. Jacks as Baron Lubberkin, the villain, was also particularly good, and seemed far more at his ease than in the comedy. Sub-Lieut. Charles H. Jacks (Zoedone) did fairly well, but his acting was rather tame throughout. Lord G. Campbell Williams was first-rate as the boy Johnny; and Gunner Frank J. Hampton

made quite a hit in the small part of Sir Elderlie. Miss Beatrice May was pretty and graceful as the heroine. The *ensemble* was perfect, the music appropriately selected and well sung. The little play met with the success it deserved, the encores were frequent, and the applause hearty. The row back in the starlight was a pleasant finish to a pleasant evening; the night was so fine that one could have wished the distance longer, and the audience must have carried away with them a pleasing recollection, not only of a good amateur performance, but also of the courtesy of their hosts.

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On Saturday, April 18, the Whittington D.S. gave their long-promised performance of "As You Like It." The play was produced under the direction of Mr. Charles Fry, and reflects much credit on his stage-management. Everything went off briskly, except perhaps the incidental music, which was given in a dirge-like fashion, and was more of a drag than a help to the performance. Rosalind is an ambitious part for an amateur to attempt, but Miss Annie Woodzell came through the ordeal surprisingly well. Of course, one could take exception to the interpretation of some of the passages, here and there; but even professional actresses miss those details at times. Miss Woodzell showed much feeling and an unflagging spirit; she put her heart and soul in her work. If Miss Woodzell was about to act in a long run of "As You Like It," instead of a single performance, I should say that her impersonation was full of excellent promise, and would soon ripen into something very good. Miss Annie Maclean, as Celia, confirmed the good impression she made some time back as the Queen in Charles I. She was earnest, and thoroughly at home on the boards. Mrs. Viveash gave a very clever rendering of Audrey, and Miss Agnes Miller was a pretty and pleasing Phœbe. All praise is due to the Orlando of Mr. Arthur Ayers, it was both manly and tender, and the conception of the rôle was as true as the rendering was finished. Mr. John Pullman's sound elocution did good service in the speeches of Jacques; they might have been more incisive, but Mr. Pullman had left a bed of sickness to act his part, and it is not fair to be too critical. The Touchstone of Mr. Walter Barnard was amusing, but he showed too much "finesse," and not enough conceit in the delivery of his lines. Touchstone is not a wit, with all his sense of humour, but has an intense belief in himself. Want of space obliges me to dismiss the rest of the cast very summarily. Mr. W. Bell was a dignified Duke, and Mr. H. W. Bell gave colour to the usurper. Captain Bateman was well suited as the Wrestler, Mr. W. T. Clark slightly exagerated as Adam. The parts of Oliver, Le Beau, and Corin were well filled by Mr. Frank Bacon, Mr. Walter Bramall, and Mr. Guildford Dudley. The First Lord, Mr. F. H. Macey, was too monotonous in his speech. Mr. B. Shipway, Mr. Edwin Bryant, Mr. L. Marcus, Mr. A. J. Hamilton, Mr. J. W. Johnstone, Mr. Lyd. Willis, Miss Tombleson, completed the cast, and all rendered good service. The most remarkable and praiseworthy point in this performance was that no one tried to shine at the expense of others, but all worked earnestly and conscientiously to present a perfect whole; and the result was eminently

satisfactory, and truly artistic. The Whittington D.S. can again record a genuine success. St. George's Hall was crowded with a most brilliant audience.

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The hearty praise and recognition so deservedly accorded the first series of recitals given by Mr. Clifford Harrison at Steinway Hall, have happily induced this gentleman to undertake a second course of similar readings, whose influence for good upon the minds of his listeners can scarcely be too highly commended and appreciated. Possessing an exceptionally retentive memory, Mr. Harrison narrates, with most dramatic effect, numerous tales and incidents of human life, as greatly opposed in sentiment and feeling as they could well be. Nevertheless, so admirably does the speaker bestow on each varying thought its proper individual weight and meaning, that for the moment we verily appear to live in the scenes thus vividly presented us. Not solely, however, through the medium of speech does Mr. Harrison arouse the sympathetic attention of his audiences, for mingling together the accents of poetry with the art of the musician, he shows how beauteously the strains drawn forth by the deft fingers of the latter can softly echo in their own peculiar fashion the recital of those "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears." We indeed, who at one period or another have pondered over Tennyson's sublime "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," or felt the peace breathing from every line of Adelaide Proctor's exquisite poem, entitled "A Legend of Provence," must assuredly own that the grand and beautiful ideas contained in the above-named works are intensified and rendered still more delightful by the sweet snatches of melody with which Mr. Harrison so appropriately embellishes his recitations of the same. Amongst variously amusing sketches of domestic life, likewise given on the first afternoon of the present series, those respectively entitled "Our Back Garden" and "Mr. Montpelier's Recitation," exhibited to great advantage the supremely natural way in which this clever artist can "take off" the ludicrously pretentious lives and manners of what is generally termed "middle-class society." Gifted with unquestionable talent of the highest and most praiseworthy order, Mr. Clifford Harrison's recitations may truthfully be said to constitute one of the most unique and pleasurable entertainments ever presented to a thoughtful-minded and amusement-loving public.

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The Tottenham House Dramatic Club gave a very good performance at St. George's Hall, on March 21, the plays selected being "My Bachelor Days" and "Crutch and Toothpick." With few exceptions, both pieces were well acted. The impersonations calling for special notice are the Guy Devereux of Mr. H. Hammond, who was gentlemanly, earnest and natural; the Cecil Leighton of Mr. Herbert Finnis, who made a capital Masher; and the Jellicoe of Mr. W. Dee, a first-rate bit of character acting. Mr. T. P. Tucker and Mr. J. R. Paine, were also very good in minor parts; but Alderman Jones, as represented by Mr. J. A. Laffy, was very unsatisfactory. Mr. C. H. Carmichael and Miss Rose Anstey also made part of the company. Dolly and Amy were entrusted to the care of

two professional ladies. Miss Effie Liston, as the young wife, showed to great advantage and displayed much feeling. A more charming Amy than Miss Kittie Claremont could not be found; this clever and gifted young lady endows all she does with a peculiar grace. She is so natural and intelligent, that you forget the actress, only to see the character living before you; and it becomes difficult to distinguish whether it is the character or Miss Claremont who has won your sympathy and fascinated you. The Tottenham House Band played between the acts in a most efficient manner, the cornet solos being especially good. Altogether this performance reflects much credit on the Tottenham House Amateurs; they were all well up in their parts, and everything went smoothly.

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The Carleton Dramatic Club gave their closing performance of the present season, on March 27, "New Men and Old Acres" being represented very successfully. But it was a surprise to find that so excellent an amateur as Mrs. Lennox Browne did not know her part. As far as the acting was concerned, her Lady Matilda was all one could wish, but the words constantly escaped her memory; and in the last scene, Mr. J. C. Carstairs also forgetting what he had to say, an excellent performance nearly came to an untimely end. We should like to remind Mrs. Lennox Browne that, "talent oblige," she is far too clever to be allowed to neglect herself. Miss Ivan Bristowe was both playful and earnest as Lilian Vavasour, Mrs. Viveash most amusing as Mrs. Bunter, and Miss Gertrude Findon very satisfactory as Fanny Bunter. Mr. A. E. Drinkwater has never been seen to better advantage than in the part of Brown, it was utterly free from that preachy tone which he sometimes assumes in serious characters: he was simple and natural. Mr. J. Humffreys Parry was also much better suited than usual, and made a good Bertie. Mr. H. S. Carstairs was an excellent Bunter, and the Blasenbalg of Mr. J. M. Powell was an admirable piece of character acting. St. George's Hall was crowded, and the audience very appreciative.

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I have only just received Mr. William Winter's charming little volume, that contains the cream of his thoughtful, eloquent, and sympathetic criticism on Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, and the Lyceum company, during two visits to America. All who value the stage as an opportunity for study as well as a means of amusement—all who earnestly consider the actor's art in this age of contemptuous frivolity and unblushing irreverence towards what is pure, lofty, and imaginative—should buy and treasure this little volume. Would that such thoughtful books on the actor's art were more possible in this country! In America they are necessary; here they would be considered superfluous. There they are welcome; here they would be laughed at. Before Mr. Irving starts on his new career of public usefulness, students of the stage should arm themselves with Mr. Winter's book as a trustworthy guide and counsellor. Henry Irving has lived down the inevitable period of contempt and ridicule. He no longer requires the support of earnest criticism to persuade the public of his genius. We

shall hear no more, please Heaven, of his "legs" or his "mannerisms." His old campaign in this country was one of endeavour; his new one will be the battlefield of understanding. In the old days he led enthusiasts; now he will lead thinkers. Without him and his popularity and his personality, we might well despair. With his aid and influence we may yet beat back that wave of scorn, contempt, and empty ridicule that threatens to swamp all that is earnest, thoughtful, and intellectual in connection with the stage and stage work. The "pestilent heresy" of scorn has its severest opponent in Henry Irving, and his dominating and convincing power was never more needed than now. Mr. William Winter has something pregnant to say on the subject of "frivolity" in connection with serious stage work.

"The principal fault of the stage of the present time is frivolity, and this "comes from the frivolity of the public and the press. Acting is a learned "profession. The stage should be devoted to good plays, well acted, and "to nothing else. The position of acting as a learned profession and the "utility of the stage as an intellectual force are not entirely appreciated. "The public is too easily pleased. Many silly things are accepted. Many "commonplace persons are admired and commended. Newspapers, almost "without exception, sedulously record, as matters of importance, the theatrical "doings of obscure individuals, who, by dint of three-sheet posters and litho-"graph portraits, assume to be actors, and, as Dr. Johnson said, make "themselves public without making themselves known. All this is out of "proportion. Such a state of things tends to lower the value of critical "recognition, cheapen the rewards of effort in dramatic art, and bring serious "and splendid endeavour and high ambition into contempt.

"The world does not advance in wisdom, virtue, and happiness by denial "and destruction. All institutions should be bent to the good of all "mankind. It was John Wesley, a clergyman, who said that the devil "should not have all the good music. Men should not make their lives, "tributary to their pursuits, but their pursuits tributary to their lives— "drawing from the stage, as from all things else, whatever is good and strong, "whatever will help to build up and round out a noble character. Must we "destroy the stage because a milksop may chance to be injured by it? Is "all life to be squared to the tastes and needs of simpletons? The thing to "be desired is gravity and thoroughness in character, more scholarship, habits "of study, the rare and noble habit of thinking, in which few persons ever "indulge. As the ideals of intellectual effort rise higher in the community, "the sincere workers upon the stage, as in every other department of "art, will be encouraged and strengthened, and the stage itself will be "ennobled."

# The Fireman's Love.

*A Dramatic Incident for Recitation.*

By J. J. Blood.

OH no, sir, she's not my own youngster, that golden-haired lassie of five,
But I think I may say that I love her more 'an anything else that's alive.
Got a story? Law bless yer, *she's* got one—she's mine through a saddish mishap;
And its funny to find us together, for I'm not a marryin' chap.
Yer see I'd a pal named Jim Dawson—he was one of this 'ere brigade—
Ah, he was a mate if you like, sir, as true and as good as they're made.
We was chums and fast friends, and there's nothing as ever our friendship once shook;
I think we was summ'at like David and Jonathan, sir, in "The Book."
Time passed and he got a young woman, a straight, nice, fresh-coloured young lass,
But she was a cut just above him—belonged to a hupperer class.
Still he loved her, and she loved him; leastways, of course she must surely have done
For there can't be a woman is living as wouldn't have loved such a one.
Her folks didn't like it a bit, though—they thought it a biggish come down
For their girl to take up with a fireman, as was nothing at all in the town;
And so when a chap all palaver, a gent who could argue and chouse,
Somehow got the blind side the mother—and she, mind, was boss of that house—
Why what could a girl do agin 'em, when father and mother agreed,
Although 'twas the shamefulest business, on my life, sir, as I ever see'd;
For it was the brass as he wanted—Well—*I* should 'er "gone" straight for him.
However, one day she was married, and the bridegroom, sir—wasn't poor Jim.

* * * * * * * *

He didn't say much at the time, though I saw and I knew what he felt,
For he grew far-away-like and silent, and he'd put on his helmet and belt
At times like as if he warn't with us, and didn't hear naught as was said—
I mean as to chaffin' and jokin'—but for dooty, he was on it, sir—dead.
He came to me cryin' one mornin', and let out a lot of his grief,
Told me all about her, how she'd married a brute of a bully and thief.
He'd just then been lagged, had the husband, and he cleaned out her father, the cur,
And although he dain't tell me this, sir, I *know* that Jim's wages kept *her*.
And there was a child by the marriage, a girl, then about a year old—
That's the one, sir, a-nussin' the dolly, with the curls there, a-shinin' like gold.

Well, one day came a call—we were out and away in a twink—the old style,
And before you could tighten a buckle we'd done a good couple of mile;
Jim was standin' right up on the engine—I can see him quite plain it seems now—
With the look as I spoke of that fixed yer, and held yer, you couldn't tell how.
On a sudden he yelled like a luney, and his face seemed with fury aflame,
"It's the street where she lives, true as Heaven—by God, too, the house is the same."
A scramble—a rush—and a scurry; a cheer from the crowd, and a jerk;
Smoke—flames—and a sea of white faces—and the boys are all down and at work.
The clank and the thud of the engine, the hiss of the water and fire,
The glare still glows brighter and brighter, and the flame-tongues lick higher and higher.
"There's a woman and child in an attic!"—From the yard at the back comes the shout—
"Oh save them, and don't lose a moment, for the house must be almost burnt out."
I was there like a shot, you may bet, sir—we'd worked the escape from the street,
And cleared out the building, as we thought—but here, at the back, we were beat;
For there at a top attic window stood the girl Jim had lost soon as won,
And there was that yellow-haired babby, just a-clappin' her hands at the fun.
Just then the fire burst out beneath 'em, and the laugh turned at once to a scream—
When I *think* of that picture I shudder—now, it seems like an awful bad dream.
The ladders were too short to reach 'em, besides there was fire all below—
It was death to attempt at a rescue—we men stood, like struck by a blow;
We was taken aback and quite dazed like, with a feeling as if we should choke,
And then came again a great quiet, broke by fire-cracks an' rushings of smoke;
Then a wail like a animal wounded, and a cry came despairing and wild,
"Can *no* one come up here and help us? If you cannot save me, save my child."
There are times when a man's heart stands still, sir, and the blood seems a-bursting his head,
That was just how I felt standing helpless—no more good there than if I was dead;
Then I made a mad rush for a ladder, and I struggled and yelled as if cracked—
If the boys hadn't held on like demons, I'd been burnt to a coke—that's a fact.
The smoke in black bundles came rolling, with flame-forks a-darting all through,

And still you could hear that voice crying, and the screams of the baby-girl too.
They was hid—and now seen—when that minute such a cheer went up straight from the crowd—
I don't think the archangel's trumpet will, to me, be as welcome and loud;
For there, on the roof, was Jim Dawson a-scrambling right over the place
Where the mother and child was a-standing, with again that rum look on his face:
On he came, slipping down to the spouting, clawing on to the tiles like a cat;
Then he lay at full length in the gutter, and stretched out his arm for the brat.
The flames blew aside for one instant, and we saw he'd the child in his grip,
But how he got back to the roof-top, I never could tell, with no slip.
A roar, then a still as was death-like, as again he came down to the spout,
And lay once again on his face, sir, and stretched forth his arm right straight out.
Like a man as is drowning she caught at his strong loving hand in despair—
"He has got her!"—"Good heavens! he's slipping!" For a moment he hung in the air—
Then, thud! he came down on the pavement—miss'd the tarpaulin just by a shave,
And she—fell back again in the window: the fire was her end and her grave.
As he was, burnt and broken, we took him right off to the 'ospital nigh;
But I knew when I looked in his face, sir, he was only took there just to die.

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And he died in my arms, saying "Annie," and he smiled like he'd used to at me.
The girl as he loved was named Annie—it's the name of that youngster yer see.

# THE THEATRE.

## What does the Public want?

By William Archer.

NOT long ago it was my fortune to assist, an amused listener, at an argument on some social subject between a Scotchman and an Irishman, the one a logician, the other a paradoxist. "But haven't you just said such-and-such a thing," cried the Scot, triumphant at having entrapped his antagonist into a self-contradiction. "Oh, that was five minutes ago," replied the other, unabashed. "You mustn't rake up such old stories as that."

So far as I know, Mr. Sydney Grundy has nothing of the Irishman in his composition; yet in his refusal to be bound by the utterances of five minutes ago he reminds me of my Irish friend. The last number of The Theatre contained an article by Mr. Grundy, defending, or purporting to defend, Mr. G. R. Sims against "the sledge-hammer of the high-class critic"—an anonymous individual who seems to have been treating "The Last Chance" with contumely. His apology appears to me to play the anvil to "the high-class critic's" sledge-hammer. It defends "The Last Chance" much as the nether millstone defends the grist from the upper. With its merits as an apology, however, I am not here concerned. Mr. Sims must decide for himself whether Codlin is the friend, or Short. My purpose is merely to note the matter of Mr. Grundy's plea, and then to compare with it another of his utterances.

To put it briefly, Mr. Grundy admits that "The Last Chance" is a bad play, but argues that the public wants bad plays, and that Mr. Sims proves himself "a most clever author and man of business" in seeing that it gets them. At first sight this plea appears to refer only to the Adelphi audiences, but Mr. Grundy

is clearly not prepared either to show that the Adelphi audience differs essentially, and for the worse, from any other melodramatic audience, or, if it does, to explain why Mr. Sims is bound to content himself with being playwright-in-ordinary to the Adelphi Theatre. If the public is to bear the blame of Mr. Sims' shortcomings, it must be the whole public, and Mr. Grundy does not shrink from this conclusion. Nay more, to complete his argument, it is necessary to show that all successful melodramas are successful in virtue, not of their goodness, but of their badness; consequently Mr. Grundy proceeds to prove that "The Silver King" is essentially a bad play, and that what is good in it is merely tolerated for the sake of what is bad. Having thus demonstrated that Sims would spell ruin, and Jones bankruptcy, if either of these authors ventured to write "a thoroughly unconventional melodrama," Mr. Grundy pats Mr. Sims on the back, and bids him go on and prosper in serving out baby fare to the public—for "a baby it is, as a baby it should be treated."

So far, so good. Whether tenable or not, this is a quite rational proposition. But just a fortnight after the appearance of this article in THE THEATRE, there appears an essay in another journal, likewise signed "Sydney Grundy," in which we are told that "the public will rally round what is best, as the despised and maligned public always does, when it gets a fair chance." How are we to harmonize these two statements? Has the British public, a baby only the other day, attained to years of discretion in one fortnight? Or does Mr. Grundy tacitly except the Adelphi and Princess's audiences, the patrons of melodrama, from "the public" at large? If so, he is like a politician who should make some general assertion about the English people, and tacitly except the middle classes. I very much fear the statements are not by any means to be harmonized, and that Mr. Grundy will have to say, with my Irish friend, "Oh, I wrote that about the baby a fortnight ago." The fact is, Mr. Grundy has of late had the apologue of "The Silver Shield" so much in his mind that he cannot help looking at both sides of the case; but when he sees the one, he forgets the other.

I have brought these two deliverances face to face because I think it is of vast importance that the playwright of to-day should rightly gauge the public he addresses, neither despising it too much nor putting too much faith in it. Moreover, I think it

a most hopeful sign that some of our leading playwrights, such as Mr. H. A. Jones and Mr. Grundy, should take to theorizing. Their utterances claim all attention, and the questions they raise should, if possible, be thoroughly thrashed out. The French dramatists have, in their prefaces, an accepted medium for theoretics, of which many of them are not slow to avail themselves. As English plays are not published, English playwrights are debarred this means of expression. It seems to me, then, an excellent thing that they should make the periodical press supply this want, and should discuss the principles and tendencies of their craft in the necessary intervals of its practice. Therefore it is in no mere spirit of contradiction, but in the hope of helping Mr. Grundy and his fellow-workers to arrive at a true estimate of what the public really wants, that I propose shortly to examine his two theories.

It is certainly in no spirit of contradiction, for I contradict neither of them. A few years ago I should have assented unhesitatingly to the baby theory. The public seemed then to be "pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw," thrilled by mere bombast, moved by sheer fustian. "Write down to your audience, and you can't write too low down," would then have been the best practical advice to a practical playwright. But have not audiences changed, and are they not day by day changing? Wherever the impetus may have come from—and in the pages of this Magazine one would be sorry to cast doubts on Mr. Grundy's belief that it came from the critics, and especially from one prominent critic well-known to readers of THE THEATRE—there has undoubtedly been an advance in all departments of theatrical life, and not least, as a matter of course, in the character of audiences. The sediment, indeed, is always the same, but it now bears a smaller proportion to the whole mass. Consequently I believe that Mr. Grundy was playing the part of the foolish counsellor in encouraging Mr. Sims to go on providing penny-plain-twopence-coloured melodramas on the ground that the public does not want, and will not have, a superior article. The public, if I read the signs aright, though it has by no means cast off childish things, is rapidly outgrowing them. Mr. Grundy proceeds on the assumption that "The Last Chance" is a success, and there is no reason to doubt that for the moment it is running prosperously. But will it last? will it wash? will it bear trans-

plantation and revival? "The Lights o' London," as we have recently seen, retains a good deal of vitality, but it is precisely in virtue of the elements of strength which are lacking in "The Last Chance." The first act, though better knit than any scene in "The Last Chance," fell unmistakably flat, because it was purely conventional. Had the whole play remained on the same level, the revival would have been a fiasco. What saved it was the Dickens-like humour of the Jarvis family, the daring *coup de théâtre* at the end of the third act, the genuine strength of the scene between Seth Preene and Hetty, and, above all, the keenly observed episodes of low life which were as fresh and "fetching" as ever. Supposing "The Last Chance" to be revived three and a half years hence, will the dock-gate scene, the Irish lodging-house keeper, and the little girl in the hospital garden be sufficient to secure it a renewed lease of life? All the rest of the play is far below the level of the first act of "The Lights o' London," which, as aforesaid, decidedly missed fire. Surely, then, Mr. Sims is not quite such a superlative man of business as his apologist would have us believe, if he prefers temporary to more or less permanent success. Without any ambition to write "for posterity," a playwright is surely wise in his generation who tries to give his plays staying-power for more than a single season. Posterity may be trusted to write its own plays, as it will make its own clothes; but that is no reason why we should cry, "Shoddy's the only wear." "The Silver King" may be a good play or a bad, conventional or unconventional, but I cannot help thinking that in writing it, Messrs. Jones and Herman proved themselves better men of business than Mr. Sims in writing "The Last Chance." Their goose will go on laying golden eggs periodically and indefinitely, whereas Mr. Sims' bird, though it may lay a monster to begin with, will exhaust itself in the effort.

What, then, are we to say of Mr. Grundy's other theory? Are we to admit that "when it gets a fair chance, the public will rally round what is best?" Surely not. To my mind, and, I think, to Mr. Grundy's as well, "what is best" is a play in which a serious moral problem is seriously handled; and from this the public would shrink as from a visit to the dentist's. We are not yet within a measurable distance of an ethical drama—a drama which shall be an efficient factor in the spiritual life of the nation.

But if the time for an ethical drama has not yet come, the purely fantastic drama—to use Mr. Matthew Arnold's phrase—has had its day. Its exclusive reign, that is to say, is over. It will always have its place on the stage, chiefly in the form of farce but it will no longer occupy the whole field. However strongly Mr. Grundy may "challenge the statement," it may be said with truth of an immense number of the public that they go to the theatre simply to be amused,* and do not care at all about mimic woes. "The Pink Dominos" does not "console" them (though for my part I should find as much consolation in "The Pink Dominos" as in "Caste"); but after the ordinary wear and tear, or ennui and vacuity, of the day, it affords a pleasant, languid relaxation. Mere amusement is literally a pastime (*Zeitvertreib*, as the Germans say), whereas interest, however mild, is an exercise. The one is passive, the other active, and while human nature remains strong in man there will always be many who like to fleet their hours of leisure passively, not actively. Still, I am quite at one with Mr. Grundy in thinking that a majority, and a growing majority, of playgoers prefer being interested to being merely amused; and then the question comes to be, what interests them? They will rally round what is best, says Mr. Grundy, in a fine frenzy of unwonted optimism. I am not an optimist, but a "meliorist," and I prefer to say that they show a growing tendency to rally round what is better.

Auguste Vitu, in the first article of his "Mille et Une Nuits du Théâtre," has the following pregnant saying: "In the work of an observer, of a moralist, as every dramatic writer ought to be who has not, like Scribe and his school, given up all attempt at thought, one can discern three elements perfectly distinct from each other though always intermingling and contributing to the same end: a painting, a judgment, an ideal (*une peinture, un jugement, un idéal.*)" Until the period of the dramatic revival, the English drama, belonging to the school of Scribe in this, if in this alone, had given up all attempt at thought. It was, as Mr.

* Even M. Francisque Sarcey, speaking of the supposed moral lesson of Dandet's "L'Arlésienne," remarks, "Je ne conteste pas ce point de vue; mais au théâtre, moi, vous le savez, la moralité ne me touche que modérément. Je ne viens au théâtre que pour m'amuser, et *l'Arlésienne* ne m'amuse pas." Clearly, however, "s'amuser" in M. Sarcey's mouth, means something different from "to be amused" in Mr. Grundy's. M. Sarcey is known to be an enthusiast for classic tragedy, which can scarcely, in our sense, amuse him. His "to be amused" is, perhaps, nearly equivalent to Mr. Grundy's "to be interested."

Arnold said, fantastic, quite out of touch with the realities of life, a sort of "chimaera bombinans in vacuo." That stage we have now passed, and the public, as it seems to me, is beginning to demand more and more imperatively that the dramatist shall be, not indeed a moralist, but an observer, and shall give in his work, not a judgment or an ideal, but a painting.

Observation!—is not that the first and last word of the serious modern drama? Truth—not the whole truth, but a certain part of the truth—is not that what interests the public, and what it really demands? In the mere externals of everyday English life there is a boundless store of possible effects for the keen observer and the adroit depictor. The burning questions of individual morality need not be touched upon in such a way as to bring the blush to the cheek of the Lord Chamberlain or the young lady in the dress circle. A drama in which "judgments" and "ideals" shall be embodied may develop itself later on. In the meantime the public is satisfied with pictures of life and character, selected so as to suggest no very inflammatory topics, yet faithful so far as they go; and the day will soon come when, in work pretending to be serious, the public will be satisfied with nothing short of this.

As we review the chief successes, apart from farce, of the last few years, I think we shall find that they distinguish themselves from their forerunners mainly by reason of this quality of observation; and we can scarcely be wrong in attributing to this quality some portion at least of their extraordinary powers of attraction. In "The Lights o' London" no one will deny that it was from the first the touches of truth which told. In "The Silver King" not even the happy inspiration upon which the plot is founded would have secured success had it not been for the way in which every inch of the canvas is worked over with touches taken straight from the life. "Saints and Sinners," again—a faulty enough play in many respects—lived through a factious opposition simply because Mr. Jones had had the courage to "go to Nature," to observe and reproduce. Mr. Pinero, though his chief successes have been made in farce, has earned every one's respect by his conscientious efforts at faithful observation. They have not always been successful, but that has been due to a certain crudity in his manner of presentation, as well as to injudicious selection of plot and arrangement of incidents. In Mr.

Grundy's own admirable work, "The Silver Shield," what was it that produced the greatest effect? Not the scenes and situations on which the plot depended (with the exception of one scene thrown into relief by Miss Kate Rorke's exquisite acting), but the closely observed touches of theatrical character, and especially the first half of the third act, a passage throbbing with human nature, humorously yet truthfully rendered. I am aware that the success of such a play as "Called Back"—a piece as devoid of observation as any play professing to deal with real life well can be—seems to run counter to my theory; but "Called Back" had been very exceptionally advertised by the success of the book, and was not without strong melodramatic qualities of which the actors took masterly advantage. I am far from denying that mere interest of plot, helped out by powerful acting, has still power to attract the public; all I argue is that the general taste is setting towards reproductions of real life. And that the playwright who combines observation with invention has a much better chance of genuine and lasting success than he who relies on invention alone, or on annexation from the French. And his task is, in reality, easier; for the plots which are capable of "going alone," so to speak, are of limited number and are being rapidly worked out, whereas a very simple and even familiar plot will suffice for a faithful study of character and manners.

Were I bound, then, to give complete adherence either to Mr. Grundy the pessimist or to Mr. Grundy the optimist, I should pin my faith to the latter rather than the former. And especially would I implore Mr. Sims to be deaf to Mr. Grundy the cynic, and all ears to Mr. Grundy the idealist. In shooting at a mark two paces off (I mean at mere momentary success), it may be all very well to aim low; but if your shot is to carry, you must give it a certain elevation.

# Yes or No?

*Recited by* MR. HENRY IRVING *at the dinner given by him to his Company at Pittsburg, on Christmas Eve,* 1884.

[This poem is suggested by an old Dutch custom which prescribes to the wooer a symbol of acceptance or refusal. As his mistress sits by the fire he waits for her to replenish it. If this be done it is a sign that his suit is successful; but if she lets the embers die out he knows there is no hope.]

I.

LEANS he 'gainst the old Dutch ingle,
Half in hope and half in fear;
Firelight shadows dancing mingle,
Weave their fret-work far and near.
Strong of limb, yet shapely moulded,
Features bronzed with ocean tan,
Stands he there with arms enfolded,
Hoping blessing—fearing ban.
Will he dare to learn by asking
Will she be his comely wife?
'Tis the fire so warmly basking,
Holds the secret of his life!
When the ruddy embers dwindle
Should the maiden wish to bless,
She will then the flames rekindle,
And that act shall whisper—"Yes."

II.

Sits she there so quaintly pretty
In her cap and waistless gown,
With her face all ripe with blushes,
And her eyes turned meekly down.
Hears no sound, the clock still ticking
Many a weary-hearted moan,
As in sympathetic sorrow,
For the time already flown.
Keen and anxiously he watches,
While the embers sinking low,
Steep the maiden's graceful figure
In a rosy tinted glow.
Well she knows his errand thither,
And the love-flowers in his heart;
Will she bid their blossoms wither?
Shall they bloom—or die apart?

III.

Sits she there in golden beauty,
  Gently rocking to and fro,
Till at last the struggling embers,
  With the last spark answer, "No!"
One long sigh—one sob half broken—
  Stirs the sailor's stricken breast.
Told his fate, yet no word spoken,
  All his life one long unrest.
Moving slowly towards the threshold
  With a rugged kind of grace,
Grasps the latch and sadly turning,
  Looks a look that clasps her face.
Long, too long his farewell taking,
  In that glance of yearning light;
Then with heart, all crushed and bleeding,
  Drifts into the lonely night.

HAL LOUTHER.

# Notes by an Old Playgoer.

BY CHARLES HERVEY.

ONE of the first literary men whose acquaintance I made in Paris was the vaudevillist, Marion Dumersan, the well-known author of "Victorine," "Les Saltimbanques," and some two or three hundred other pieces. He was then an elderly man, having been born in 1780, extremely courteous in manner, and of studious habits, seldom to be met with out of the small apartment occupied by him at the Bibliothèque, where he had been for many years at the head of the medal and coin department. Besides his dramatic productions, he had published several works on archæology and numismatics, on both of which subjects he was regarded as an infallible authority; his memory was prodigious, and his store of anecdote on every conceivable topic inexhaustible. He had known Talma intimately, and spoke enthusiastically of the great actor's devotion to his art. "No one," he said, "had less confidence in his own powers; he was ever striving after a perfection he imagined himself incapable of attaining, and once when, after

a magnificent performance of "Sylla," we were alone in his dressing-room at the Français, he seemed more discouraged than usual, and shaking his head in reply to my congratulations, sadly remarked that the lifetime of an actor was not sufficient to enable him to play a single part perfectly well.

Dumersan also related to me a scene he had himself witnessed in 1823 at the Panorama Dramatique, where a piece was brought out, the prominent figures in which were a shepherd and his sheep. In order to give a realistic air to the performance, the manager had conceived the idea of introducing a flock of real sheep on the stage, and these having been procured with some difficulty, and trained to group themselves quietly round the shepherd, the *régisseur* declared himself satisfied with their tractability, and the first night of the novelty was duly announced. No sooner, however, had the animals made their appearance in a more or less orderly style, than a tremendous burst of applause from the crowded house so unexpectedly startled them that, after a moment's indecision, the most intrepid among them, descrying a haven of refuge in a stage-box on the ground tier, plunged suddenly into it, to the terror of its occupants, a party of smartly dressed ladies, who beat a rapid retreat into the adjoining corridor. Meanwhile the rest of the flock, leaping madly over the footlights, invaded the orchestra, overturning the musicians who vainly strove to repel the intruders, and from thence made their way right and left into the body of the theatre. A scene of indescribable confusion ensued, and more than an hour elapsed before the truants, with the aid of butcher boys hastily summoned from their post in the *coulisses*, were finally re-captured, and the curtain fell on the unfinished drama.

Very different in appearance and mode of life from this amiable recluse was his colleague Mélesville, the versatile author of "Michel Perrin," "Elle est folle" (does any one remember Elton and Mrs. Nisbett in the English version, the "Delusion?"), "Le Secretaire et le Cuisinier" (*Anglicé* "Fish out of Water"), and a host of other successes, from the libretto of "Zampa" to Mdlle. Georges' great card, "La Chambre Ardente." When I knew him, he occupied a handsome suite of apartments in the Place Vendôme, mixed freely in general society, and held weekly receptions, which were chiefly attended by the *élite* of his literary brethren and the financial magnates of the Chaussée d'Antin. He was a little

man, constitutionally irritable and abrupt in manner, and apt to say sharp things when annoyed ; and I remember a case in point. One of his last pieces, "Carlo Beati," written expressly for Arnal, and produced at the Vaudeville in 1846, having been coldly received, he laid the blame on his interpreter, asserting that he had totally misunderstood the character ; whereas the actor, with far more reason, maintained that it was impossible to make anything out of such flimsy material. "Ce pauvre Mélesville," quietly remarked Arnal, with a pitying shrug of his shoulders, "qui veut que je fasse vivre son 'ours,' sans me donner de quoi le nourrir !"

One of the most curious types I ever met with in Parisian society was the Comte de Castellane, the owner of a magnificent *hôtel* in the Faubourg St. Honoré, and almost as eccentric in his habits and way of life as the Marquis d'Aligre himself. Any one so utterly regardless of his personal appearance it was impossible to conceive ; his coat was invariably threadbare, and his hat in the last stage of decay ; and thus accoutred, he perambulated the Boulevard and the Champs Elysées with a jaunty and self-satisfied air, swinging his cane as he walked, and occasionally saluting an acquaintance (for he knew everybody) with a waive of his gloveless hand. At the back of his house was a pretty little theatre, where performances, either by amateurs or by the leading artists of the Comédie Française, were frequently given ; the last I remember being the first essay of a *proverbe* by Augustine Brohan, played by herself and Delaunay. Once, and once only, M. de Castellane tried his skill at dramatic composition, and after infinite labour produced a one-act comedy, entitled "Les Eaux de Spa," which figured in the bills of the Vaudeville on a benefit night, and was so cruelly handled by the audience that, on the author's name being ironically called for, it was announced that he preferred to remain incognito. In the course of the following summer, feeling slightly indisposed, the Count consulted his physician, who recommended immediate change of air, innocently suggesting that "les Eaux de Spa" would certainly do him good. "Cela m'étonnerait bien," drily replied his patient ; "car je les ai déjà essayées, et elles ne m'ont pas réussi."

Many years ago, when at Brighton, I remember hearing Charles Young relate an anecdote of the Duchess of St. Albans (Harriet Mellon), which I give, as far as my memory serves me, in his own

words. "I received a note from her one day, requesting me to call on her next morning at her house in Regency Square. When I arrived, she said to me, 'Young, I want you to do me a favour. I have been told that Mrs. —— (a retired actress who had formerly played with her at Drury Lane) is in great distress; and although we never were on the best of terms together, that is no reason why she should be in need of money when I have more than I want. Here,' she continued, handing me a roll of bank notes, 'are a hundred pounds. Please let her have them, and if a further sum should be required, you have only to apply to me for it; but on no account let her know from whom it comes, as that might look like ostentation, which I wish to avoid.' I took the money, and sent it to John Cooper, who was personally acquainted with Mrs. ——, privately enjoining him to keep the donor's name a secret, which he did, and the recipient of the Duchess's bounty never knew to whom she was indebted for it to her dying day."

Young told us several good stories of Sheridan Knowles, one of which I remember. "We were walking together in the Strand," he said, "when my companion was suddenly accosted by an elderly man, a stranger to me, who reminded him that he had not yet sent him a promised box for the 'Hunchback.' 'Bless me, my dear fellow,' cried Knowles, 'no more I have! Let me see, we play it to-morrow; will that suit you?' 'Perfectly,' replied the other. 'Then it is an understood thing, and you may depend on my not forgetting you.'

"When the individual had left us, 'a capital fellow,' said Knowles; 'great friend of mine'—here he paused with a puzzled look—'what bothers me is, that I can't for the life of me recollect where he lives, or what his name is!'"

Here is a pretty note from Henriette Sontag to Carolina Ungher after the latter's performance of "Parisina." "All I have seen and heard is perfection; the only doubt in my mind is whether my admiration is most due to the actress or to the singer. Accept it, dear friend, for *both!*"

Derval, the ex-actor of the Palais Royal and Gymnase, who died early in 1885, was in every respect a perfect gentleman, and highly esteemed by all who knew him. His real name was Dobigny, and he had been connected with the stage, either as comedian or *régisseur*, since 1828. He married, if I remember

rightly, an extremely pretty girl, whom some of my readers may have seen and admired "long, long ago" in the "Poses Plastiques" at the Hall of Rome.

I find among my notes the following anecdote of Nestor Roqueplan, the witty author of "Parisine," and one of the only managers of the Grand Opéra who contrived to make money by the speculation. He was once invited to a ball at the Hôtel de Ville during the edileship of Rambuteau of "Vespasiennes" notoriety, and not feeling disposed to pass half the night in the long "file" of carriages slowly plodding thither from all parts of Paris, hit upon an ingenious method of arriving in good time at his destination. Sending his servant for a litter which, according to his directions, was brought into his court-yard, he laid himself down upon it full dressed, and, a cloth having been lightly thrown over him, was safely borne by two stout porters to the peristyle of the *hôtel*, every one they met compassionately making way for the supposed sufferer. The astonishment of the crowd assembled near the entrance may be imagined when the bearers of the litter suddenly stopped, and Roqueplan, casting aside the covering which had enshrouded him from view, arose from his recumbent position in all the splendour of an elaborate toilet, and made a triumphant entry into the ball-room exactly as the clock struck twelve.

The only person I ever met with who preferred Jenny Lind's "maidenly" version of "Norma" to that of Grisi was Macready, who, in a conversation I had with him in 1847 at his house in Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park, maintained, to my great surprise, that in his opinion her interpretation of the character was undoubtedly the correct one.

Those who have heard—and who has not?—"La Fille de Madame Angot," may not be aware that seventy-seven years before the production of this charming operetta at the Folies Dramatiques in 1873, the name of Angot was already familiar to Parisian playgoers. In 1796, the mother of M. Lecocq's heroine first made her appearance on the boards of the Théâtre d'Emulation in a two-act vaudeville by Maillot entitled "Madame Angot, ou la Poissarde parvenue;" this was followed in 1797 by "Le Mariage de Manon, ou la suite de Madame Angot" by the same author, and in 1800 by "Le Repentir de Madame Angot," also by Maillot. In 1803, the indefatigable dramatist Aude produced at the Ambigu "Madame Angot au sérail de Constantinople,"

which, chiefly owing to the drollery of Corsse in the title-part, enjoyed a run of over two hundred nights, and induced the author to give a sequel in the same year, called "Madame Angot au Malabar." In 1805 appeared "Madame Angot dans son ballon," in 1817 "La critique de Madame Angot," and in 1860 "La nouvelle Madame Angot" by de Jallais. If we add to these "Madame Angot et ses demoiselles" (played a hundred and thirty nights at the Folies Marigny), and some half a dozen other trifles inspired by Lecocq's masterpiece, we shall find that Maillot's original idea has furnished matter for at least fifteen more or less successful imitations from 1796 to the present day.

The mention of "La Fille de Madame Angot" naturally recalls the name of Siraudin, one of its authors, who, however, made less money as a dramatist than as the ostensible owner of the bonbon shop in the Rue de la Paix. The last time I saw him was at Wiesbaden, shortly before the suppression of the gaming tables, of which he was a regular *habitué* as long as he had a florin left to stake on the six first numbers of the roulette. He was then accompanied by his wife, a stout lady, with an eye to the main chance, who, whenever her liege lord was in luck—which seldom occurred—took possession of three-fourths of his winnings, and prudently invested them in buck-horn ornaments and other "portable property," which she stowed away in a huge basket hanging on her arm. One day I met him in conversation with an inquisitive German, who for some occult reason of his own was endeavouring to worm out of him what he thought of the state of parties in France, and was visibly annoyed by the vague and unsatisfactory answers he received. "Am I to understand, Monsieur," he inquired in an aggrieved tone, "that you have *no* political opinions?"

"Certainly, I have," coolly replied Siraudin; "but, they depend on the person I happen to be talking to!"

Scribe was often unjustly charged with putting his name to pieces of which he had not written a line, whereas it would appear from the following well-authenticated anecdote that the reproach might have been more correctly addressed to his "collaborateurs." At a dinner, where a certain number of the literary fraternity were present, one of the party having indulged in some acrimonious remarks on the subject alluded to, Carmouche effectually silenced him by saying: "Gentlemen, I have been

announced in the bills as author of eleven vaudevilles in partnership with Scribe, all of which have been more or less successful; and I declare positively that in not one of them, as performed on the stage, is there a single word of mine!"

When very young I saw Richard Jones play Flutter in "The Belle's Stratagem," and Alfred Highflyer in "A Roland for an Oliver." I was hardly of an age to appreciate his acting, and in the second piece especially fear that I had only eyes and ears for the bewitching Miss Foote as Maria Darlington. After his retirement from the stage, Jones established himself as a teacher of elocution at No. 14, Chapel Street, Belgrave Square, and was in great request with young clergymen and embryo members of parliament. One of the latter, a scion of a noble house, for whose ulterior benefit a "pocket borough" had been carefully nursed, and who from his birth had been afflicted with an impediment of speech, came to him under the impression that he might be cured of so distressing an infirmity. The ex-comedian having expressed his regret at being unable to relieve him, his visitor, coolly turning on his heel, cavalierly remarked that he could do very well without his help, as he had only to follow the example of Demosthenes, and practise speaking with pebbles in his mouth.

"Exactly what I was about to suggest," retorted Jones, irritated by the other's insolent tone; "and if you should happen to swallow one by mistake, you will have the consolation of knowing that, although you may *possibly* be a loss to your family, your constituents are not likely to be of the same opinion!"

# Told in the Firelight.

"IS Mr. Pain in?"

"No, Miss, he isn't. He won't be here afore six."

"And it is only five now! How tiresome! I cannot go all the way back again, and it is coming on to snow."

"There is a nice fire in Mr. Pain's room, Miss. Suppose you go in there and wait," suggested old Jones. He was the door-keeper of the Theatre Royal, Tagby, and knew better than to offend the London actress. "You go straight in there, Miss, and make yourself comfortable. I know the master won't be later than six, 'cos Mr. Logan has got an appointment with him."

"Mr. Logan? Very well then, I will wait;" and Kate Tracy walked through the dingy green-room and turned into the manager's private den, where, as old Jones had averred, the fire was blazing cheerily. She was a handsome, attractive-looking woman, and she made a very pretty picture in her dark furs, as she stood by the hearth and warmed herself in the firelight.

"So then Harry will be here soon," ran her unspoken thought, while a happy smile played round her lips; "and Pain is sure to be late—he always is—and Harry will come in here and find . . . me!" She stretched her white hands to the blaze, and a contented little laugh broke the stillness of the room. "Mr. Logan and I are getting into a terrible habit of finding each other at all sorts of places, and yet it is hardly a month since I first saw him. How would it be if I had never seen him?" Unconsciously she had spoken the last words aloud, and as if in direct answer to her question at the same moment the coals fell together and plunged the room in darkness. "Clever little fire," said Kate approvingly; "I will take that as my answer. So it would; it would have been very dark and very cheerless. And now tell me what the future will be like. Come, blaze up."

Like most women, having consulted the oracle, she determined to work it her own way, and seizing the poker, commenced an attack, which, being more vigorous than systematic, had anything but the desired effect. For a moment or two the flame leapt up fitfully, and then the fire settled down in a glowering, sullen

fashion that made the darkness just visible—no more. Poor Kate! Superstitious by nature, she felt a sudden shock as the last faint flames flickered and died away, and all the laughter faded from her face as she rose to her feet and walked to the farther end of the room.

"I know I am an idiot to care one way or the other," she thought, dismally; "but oh, how I wish that fire had burnt up. A dark future means losing Harry, and losing Harry means—— No, I am not going to think of that."

She seated herself in a chair by the window, and leaning back, lost herself in a day-dream of the past. A day-dream that was not bright or happy; a dream in which she saw a sad and loveless childhood; saw later years, still drearier, when a strong and sharp temptation to be free from the hand-to-mouth struggle had assailed the young actress; saw fame coming to her slowly; and then, clear and bright in the midst of all these misunderstandings and troubles, she saw the day when she first met Harry Logan, the day that her memory framed in sunshine.

A half-stifled sob recalled her to the present. The fire had done its work of warning, and the fitful flames were again stealing upward, sending ruddy flashes on the chairs and books that were nearest, and leaving the rest of the big room in deep shadow. Down by the hearth, her face buried in her hands, crouched the girl whose broken sob had interrupted the thread of the day-dream, and with a sudden pity for the desolate-looking young figure, Kate crossed the room and knelt down by her side.

"What is the matter, dear?" she asked.

"Mon Dieu! Ah, madame, pardon." The girl raised her wet eyes and turned with a startled cry. "I did not know that any one was here," she stammered; "I ask your pardon, I will go."

Such a child! Seventeen at most, with a small wistful face, and big pathetic eyes, and Kate's heart went out to her as she took the nervous, twitching fingers in her own strong clasp.

"No, you must not go," she said gently. "Tell me what is the matter, Who do you want? I am only waiting to see Mr. Pain."

The girl mistook her. "You are Mrs. Pain?" she cried eagerly, speaking the words with a pretty accent that betrayed her French origin. "Ah! then you will help me, Let me see your face." She looked steadily into Kate's eyes for a full minute, and then,

apparently satisfied with what she read there, she gave a little sigh. "I will trust you; the good God put the colour in your eyes," she said, repeating the Bretagne belief, "and He sent you to help me. I want Mr. Logan."

"*You* want him—why?"

Her sobs broke out afresh. "Ah! but why indeed, madame, you will understand. He never come to see me now. So I come here, and I ask the man at the door, and he says I may wait here till he come."

"Yes, yes, dear, you did quite right. Don't be frightened. But tell me, why do you want him?" and Kate's hand involuntarily tightened its hold.

"Moi, je suis sa fiancée," said the girl simply. "Sweet Heart, Harry calls me," and after these words there was a long pause.

Flicker, flicker, went the firelight as it danced on the opposite wall, and it shot its sparkles into Kate's weary eyes as though in mischievous glee that its warning had been disregarded. Who was she, this woman to whom life had proved so hard, that she should dare to think happiness lay within her grasp? Would she never learn that "Nature like other mothers has her spoilt children," and that the rest are apt to fare but badly? Little wonder that the firelight danced so merrily; and all the time the little French girl looked steadfastly into the proud, cold face that was so near her own, and Kate, without seeing her, looked back again and thought and planned.

"Tell me all about it," she said at last, and the clock struck the half-hour as the girl began her sad little story. Her name was Louise La Fère: she had met Harry a year ago in Dieppe, and when some months later father had died, Harry had written for her to come with mother to Tagby. Since then, mother had died too, and Harry would have married her at once, but that—and the pretty voice faltered—a London actress, a Miss Tracy, had come to the Tagby Theatre, and Harry's love had wavered. "I hate her! I hate her!" Louise ended fiercely. "She is rich, she is famous, she can choose from all the world, and I then? I am alone in a strange land, and I have only Harry." Her words died away mournfully, and for a few moments Kate stood silent.

She was thinking—in the half-dead, indistinct way in which we ponder over trifles at such times—how quiet it all was, this moment of supreme abnegation in her life. She had often enough

acted grand and pathetic scenes on the stage,—acted them in the usual way, with moanings and broken words and effective gestures, and now that she was going through the real thing, it struck her as a rough kind of satire on her mimic agony, that it was all so still and quiet. She even smiled a little at the thought, and her voice was as sweet and steady as ever as she said slowly, "I know this Kate Tracy. Don't think so hardly of her. She did not mean to injure you."

"You know her then? Ah, madame! I pray you teach me what I shall say to her. She is bad, she is wicked, this woman, but I would kneel to her, I would pray to her to go away!"

"Because you are so fond of Harry?"

"Fond? Madame, I worship him."

Kate's eyes had been fixed on a certain angle of the shadowy bookcase, and as the tearful voice spoke the last words, she suddenly lost sight of the polished corner. It seemed to pass into the prevailing darkness that enveloped the farther end of the study, and with a sudden fear at the way he was unconsciously playing into her hands, Kate felt sure that Harry Logan must have entered the room. The thickly padded door would have allowed him to do so without them hearing him, and now he must be standing beyond the reach of the firelight, hidden in the deep shadow thrown by the lofty bookcase.

An almost imperceptible pause, and then Kate laughed. "Fancy worshipping Harry Logan!" she said. "Why the man is not even worth an ordinary affection."

"I tell you, yes," the answer was flashed back; but Kate went on unheeding.

"And as for this woman . . . . Ask her what you like, child, for I am Kate Tracy."

"You!"

The actress bent her head. "Even I," she said lightly. "Why not? No, no, Louise, do not go farther back. Stay by the fire. Why, I shall not hurt you."

"You, you are a wicked woman," burst out the girl passionately; and Kate laughed again, as if she were amused.

"See now, I will tell you all about it," she said, suddenly, "for I am tired of this new whim. There is no need to hate me, Louise, for I never loved Harry."

"Never loved him?"

"Never cared the slightest bit about him," declared Kate Tracy; and only the curious firelight, as for one moment it shot into her eyes, knew of the unshed tears. "The whole story lies in a nut-shell. I came down here to Tagby to act, having previously heard that the actor with whom I should be playing was engaged to a girl of whom he was so fond that he never looked at another woman. Now, I am vain; and I pique myself on my powers of attraction. I took a bet with this friend, who told me of Harry Logan, that I would add another to my list of conquests." She was looking straight over the girl's head into the gloom beyond; and, as if impelled towards her, for one moment a white, angry face emerged from the darkness. "And I succeeded," added Kate slowly.

"Louise," she went on with a rapid change of tone, "I am candid with you, am I not? But I am leaving here next week; and soon after I shall be married. Do not be frightened, Louise, that sound was only the wind outside. Really it was nothing else; stay here by the fire. And so as I am to be married, and as I find you are such a loving, good little woman, a wife of whom any man would be proud, I thought . . . . I would . . . . tell you."

Was the room really growing so insufferably hot? Was the firelight really flashing so vividly? Kate turned towards the door. "I think I will go now," she said. "Mr. Logan will be here soon, and I do not care to meet him."

"And if he will not come back to me?"

Arrested by the pleading voice, Kate turned to retrace her steps.

"He will come back to you," she said gravely. "He will come back because he is an honourable man, though he is so weak and vain. He will come back, because in a place like Tagby his affairs are common property, and people would talk about him, or might even think I had jilted him. And lastly," with a sudden, swift motion, she stooped to kiss the pretty, wistful face, "he will come back, because a love like yours is a thing no man can afford to despise. You are a good woman, Louise, and he knows it. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," echoed the girl. "But, madame"—some thought was evidently still troubling her, and Kate stood patiently waiting,

—"tell me this one thing. If you are this woman, why were you so good to me when I came here to-night?"

"Because I am an actress," said Kate Tracy bitterly; and with that she turned and walked away.

Flicker, flicker, flash! The firelight shot into golden flames, and the whole room was illumined. The dancing sparkles fell on the re-united lovers, and brought them happy fancies of the glad, glad years to come. The fire-sparkles sent a new shy light into the girl's soft eyes, and ringed their tender radiance in her hair; and then, dancing still, they formed the straggling rays into one long golden path that led straight to the door through which Kate Tracy had passed. Up and down the shining road paced the lovers; and only the sparkles themselves knew over what they passed; for right in the golden pathway was a tiny spot on which a tear had rested, rested and shone, and then had vanished beneath their careless tread. One tiny spot, and that had almost faded,—a small enough record of what had been told in the firelight. Flicker! Flicker!

M. E. W.

BADDELEY WILL.—This will bears the date April 23, 1793. "To his faithful friend and companion, Mrs. Catherine Strictland, generally called and known by the name of Mrs. Baddeley, he bequeaths his life-interest in his house in New Store Street, and his freehold messuages, garden, &c. After her decease, the above estates, with certain moneys, to arise from the insurance of an annuity, to go to the society established for the relief of indigent actors belonging to Drury Lane Theatre. The house and premises at Moulsey to be used as an asylum for decayed actors and actresses; and, when the property amounts to £360 per annum, pensions are to be allowed. Especial care to be taken to have the words 'Baddeley's Asylum' in the front of the house. His executors to publish, every year, his letter, as it appeared in the *General Advertiser*, April 20, 1790, respecting the disagreement with his unhappy wife, to prevent the world looking upon his memory in the villainous point of view set forth in certain books and pamphlets. £100 3 per cent. Consolidated Bank Annuities, which produce £3 per annum, is left to purchase a cake, with wine and punch, which the ladies and gentlemen of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, are requested to partake of every Twelfth-Night in the green-room."

# Our Musical-Box.

## "MANON."

An Opera, in Four Acts. Words by JOSEPH BENNETT, music by MASSENET. Produced for the first time in London by the Carl Rosa Opera Company, at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on Thursday, May 7, 1885.

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| Manon ... ... ... ... | MADAME MARIE RÔZE. | Guillot ... ... ... | MR. CHARLES LYALL. |
| Poussette ... ... ... ... | MISS BENSBERG. | Lescaut ... ... ... | MR. LUDWIG. |
| Javotte ... ... ... ... | MISS PERRY. | Brétigny ... ... ... | MR. WALTER CLIFFORD. |
| Rosette ... ... ... ... | MISS BURTON. | Count Des Grieux... | MR. BURGON. |
| Chevalier Des Grieux ... | MR. JOSEPH MAAS. | | |

SINCE "Carmen" took London by storm some years ago, no novelty in the operatic line has scored so positive and, in several respects, so well deserved a success as "Manon," in producing which Mr. Rosa played the strongest trump card in his uncommonly powerful hand. As shrewd as he is enterprising, the *impresario* of the English Opera Company left nothing undone with respect to this work that could ensure its favourable reception by a public whose tastes he has carefully studied and spared no pains or expense to gratify. The uniform excellence of his intentions in this regard cannot, indeed, be too thankfully acknowledged. That they have failed to fulfil their object in one or two past instances must be attributed to Mr. Rosa's over-estimation of his clients' patriotism, rather than to any lack of intelligence or liberality on his part. In bringing out "Moro" and "The Canterbury Pilgrims" with lavish expenditure of money and labour, he attached undue importance to the circumstance that those works were of purely British origin, and allowed himself to be misled into the belief that the accident of their nationality would ensure to them enthusiastic and remunerative public support. Patriotism, however, has less to do with art in this country than in either France or Germany, where inconceivably frivolous or dull operas draw full houses, year after year, merely because they happen to have been composed by Frenchmen or Germans. English music-lovers are kittle cattle; as a rule, they would rather listen to an opera owing its genesis to a brilliant Red Indian than to one written by a tiresome Anglo-Saxon. Consequently, the works above-mentioned—and one or two more of far greater merit, which possibly deserved a better fate than that allotted to them by the patrons of English opera—fell dismally flat, despite excellent casts and splendid mounting, and were promptly withdrawn from Mr. Rosa's London *répertoire*. On the whole, the greatest hits that have hitherto been made by the English Opera Company must be credited to the account of French composers—Bizet, Ambroise Thomas, and now Massenet. Wagner's four earlier works have also brought grist to Mr. Rosa's mill; but the Wagner fever, which never rose to the rank of an epidemic in this country, has considerably subsided within the past three years, and even "Rienzi," the most intelligible of the four, admirably as Mr. Rosa puts it on the stage, is no longer a *Zug-Stueck*, at least in the metropolis. Of all the genuine English operas on his list—barring "Nadeshda," which seems to hold its own as a first-class attraction—

there is only one that can be counted upon to crowd Drury Lane whenever put up—viz., the tuneful old "Bohemian Girl," of whose musical commonplaces, narrative absurdities, and metrical abominations the London public never wearies. With these two exceptions—for Mr. Rosa has not thought fit to produce the "Beggar-Student" here, notwithstanding its extraordinary popularity in the provinces—the "great goes" of the English Opera Company's metropolitan season have been French operas, to wit, "Carmen," "Mignon," and "Manon;" a fact which goes far to prove that English audiences prefer light and showy music, abounding in prettinesses, to compositions of a more classical order—in other words, *opéra comique* to *grand opéra*.

In this tendency of British musical taste lies the secret of "Manon's" unmistakable triumph. The opera is "pretty" throughout; an amiable and pleasing mediocrity, intensely French, cleverly put together, and less tedious than any of Massenet's other operatic works that I have hitherto heard. Its numbers tickle the ear none the less agreeably by reason of their uniform lack of originality; for it is always gratifying to come across old acquaintances unexpectedly—that is, if they happen to be pleasant ones. With less passion and force than characterize Mr. Goring Thomas's efforts in the same direction, M. Massenet, in "Manon," has tried his hand—a skilful one enough—at "endless melody." As he is not a creative genius, but merely an accomplished musician endowed with constructive ability of a high class, his adoption of the "rambling method" was a risky experiment, if we may assume that he composed the music of "Manon" with a view to its performance in England and Germany, as well as in his native country. Here the experiment in question has succeeded to an extent that I find it somewhat difficult to account for. What the German verdict will be I feel strongly tempted to foretell, and am only restrained from doing so by timely remembrance of the prudent adage, "Never prophesy unless you know."

M. Massenet's share in "Manon," as that work has been produced on the English stage, is sentimental, coquettish, and occasionally frivolous. In all these respects it is in perfect keeping with the original French libretto, which deals with a peculiarly repulsive story in the light and airy manner which, if it does not cover a multitude of sins in such sort as to conceal them from the moral perception, at least tones down their coarser deformities with a lustrous varnish of cheery cynicism. In rendering this objectionable book palatable to British taste, Mr. Bennett has grappled manfully and successfully with difficulties that a less capable adaptor might well have hesitated to tackle. Keeping "the proprieties" steadfastly in view, he has purged the French operatic version of Prévost's unsavoury plot of its poisonous elements, and imparted to it a Platonic flavour which, if a thought less piquant than the *sauce relévée* in which the gifted Abbé originally served up his dissolute characters, is infinitely more wholesome. There is nothing in Mr. Bennett's book, nor in the action of his Anglicized Manon and Des Grieux to raise a blush to the cheek of a young person. The lovers are lovers in the English sense of the word, not the French. They sing to one another endearingly in the street, over a soup-tureen, and in

church—perhaps Mrs. Grundy may be excused for taking exception to this last amatory transaction, although, on the other hand, it is quite on the cards that she will pass it over with a tolerant sniff, for the worthy old lady is not nearly as particular as she used to be. But there is no absolute proof, adduced by Mr. Bennett, that the hero and heroine of his libretto are not simply a couple of affectionate young people, uncommonly hard hit by the tender passion and animated by the most honourable intentions, which they are only prevented from realizing by the untimely interference of singularly unpleasant relatives. Throughout their three long duets—the first of which, a graceful reminiscence of "Don Carlos," is the most effective number in the opera—they give utterance to no objectionable remarks. But for Des Grieux's father, who, by the way, is a far deadlier bore than his prototype in the "Traviata," there seems no reason why their attachment should not attain the consummation prescribed by the edicts of respectability. Manon's cousin can be no obstacle to her happiness with the man of her choice; Captain Lescaut is bent upon keeping his family honour unstained, but he does not care for his pretty kinswoman, or, indeed, for anything but cards and claret, predilections which cannot fail to secure to him the sympathies of many eminent statesmen, divines, and jurists. The exigencies of opera, however, require that two harmless and well-meaning persons of opposite sexes should be made exceedingly unhappy; it is Mr. Bennett's mission to put those exigencies into practice, and he does so, not only with perfect decorum, but with a great deal of true poetical feeling, often very felicitously expressed. His task has been an unusually ponderous one, and everybody interested in the production of this opera, from its composer down to the public (more particularly the vocalists, who owe him their thanks for eminently singable words) is his debtor for having fulfilled his mission with exceptional ability and discretion.

Of the performance of "Manon" by the Carl Rosa Opera Company I am able to speak in terms of almost unqualified praise. The selection of Madame Rôze to impersonate the affectionate, light-hearted, pleasure-loving heroine of Prévost's "moral tale" has proved an exceptionally happy one. Except Adelina Patti I know of no other prima-donna capable of looking, acting, and singing this particular part as effectively or as charmingly as Marie Rôze. She interprets the character with enchanting sprightliness in its frivolous phases, and with touching tenderness throughout its sentimental and passionate episodes. The music allotted to her is no less copious than difficult; indeed, she and Mr. Maas have the opera pretty nearly to themselves, "Manon" being what is technically called a "two-part piece." She renders it to perfection, with true intonation and excellent expression; her voice was never better than it is this year, and she speaks her words with a dainty precision, "trippingly on the tongue," that is quite delightful to listen to. When I heard her sing the part she fairly took the house—a crowded one—by storm half a dozen times during the performance; notably with the interpolated gavotte (act ii.) incorrectly stated to have been written expressly for her in the "Manon" rôle by M. Massenet. It is really a *rechauffé* of one of his early compositions, a song intituled "La Sérénade de Moliere," and is a pretty trifle enough. Sung by Madame

Rôze, it has obtained triple encores at every one of the eight performances of "Manon." Mr. Maas gives an interpretation of the meek but amorous Des Grieux that falls short in no respect of what might have been expected from this painstaking artist. Acting is not his *forte*, and it manifestly costs him no inconsiderable effort to maintain his erotic passion for its faithless object at high-pressure. But, if his demeanour upon the stage be somewhat stiff and constrained, nothing can be more fluent and apparently spontaneous than his admirable singing. Even when the "business" of the play places him in a ridiculous situation—as, for instance, during the abortive meal with Manon in his lodgings, when, being compelled to sing a song about a dinner-table, he stands up behind the tureen as though he were bent upon proposing a toast, and delivers himself of a pleasing though incongruous lay—his beautiful voice and irreproachable vocalization secure to him the sympathy and admiration of his audience. His sweetness of tone and highly-finished production afford an interesting contrast to Mr. Ludwig's rough *timbre* and somewhat aggressive German method of delivery. This gentleman, however, is a good specimen of the school to which he belongs—Betz himself is not a better Flying Dutchman than Mr. Ludwig—and by his intelligent acting as the *viveur* Lescaut contributed materially to lighten one or two of the opera's dullest scenes. Mr. Lyall, in the subordinate part of Guillot, furnished his admirers—that is to say, every member of the audience—with another shining illustration of his extraordinary adaptability to eccentric characters, and of the inexhaustible though never extravagant animal spirits with which, as well as with so many more of her most precious gifts, Nature has generously endowed him. Mr. Walter Clifford is a bland and tuneful De Brétigny, whose stereotyped smile bespeaks a clear conscience and a good digestion. Mr. Burgon is made up so young as Count Germont Des Grieux that, were not appearances proverbially deceitful, he might be taken for his own grandson. His singing of a long and peculiarly wearisome song, in the nature of a paternal jobation, to Mr. Maas (who contemplates him with fatherly indulgence as he proses on for several vexatious minutes) is musically meritorious; but the homily itself is a painful example of the futility characterizing M. Massenet's infrequent attempts to be serious and impressive. Mdlles. Bensberg, Perry (or was it Fenn?), and Burton, were as arch as British decorum would permit them to be in their impersonation of the three "gay" damsels who, throughout the opera, represent the principle that "whatever is naughty is nice," the adoption of which brings poor Manon to such utter grief at the close of act iv. They have a chirpy little vicious trio in the first act, which they twitter very agreeably.

Since he brought out "Rienzi" with unexampled magnificence, Mr. Rosa has not produced any opera, with respect to scenery, costumes and accessories, so splendidly as "Manon." The third, fifth, and sixth sets are, in my opinion, as fine pictures as any that have adorned even the Lyceum stage, and the dresses of principals and supers alike are rich, elegant and tasteful. Mr. Rosa is fortunate in possessing so gifted and experienced a coadjutor in such all-important matters as *mise-en-scène* and stage management as Mr. Augustus Harris, whose sound judgment and

indomitable energy achieve results that may well make Herr Chronegk and his well-trained Saxe-Meininger look to their laurels. Of the orchestra, spiritedly and delicately conducted by Mr. Goossens, I need only say that it fully maintains its well-earned reputation for fine playing and steady, discreet accompaniment. The chorus-singing, too—of which Mr. Rosa is justly proud—may challenge competition throughout Continental Europe. None of the choirs of the great subventioned operatic institutions in Germany and Austria, despite their titles, privileges and pensions, can approach that of the English Opera Company in quality of voices, truth of intonation, or correct observance of *tempi*. We may not be a musical nation; but our "singing-supers," though mere average Britons for the most part, can give points and a beating to those of France, Italy, and even the Fatherland—where, strange to say, the Imperial or Royal chorist oftener sings out of tune than in.

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Early last month, musical *matinées* set in with almost as much severity as May itself. With the exception of Sunday afternoons—during which, however, music raged in one or two of the pleasantest houses I haunt on the Sabbath—there was not a single post-meridian of that dreadful period during which persons liberally endowed with superfluous leisure and cash could not exercise the privilege of paying a guinea to hear florid old airs of the "Dip your chair" class, and contemporary ballads, such as "Never, or hardly Ever" and "In the Combing," more or less imperfectly sung by stout and gorgeously attired middle-aged matrons and slender virgins in ravishing spring toilettes, all suffering from sore throats and colds in the head, thanks to the amenities of our genial climate. A singer-friend of mine, who is the fashion just now—and very deservedly so—was on hand during the dire month at no fewer than forty-one concerts, two-thirds of which did not even indemnify him for the cost of his gloves and cab-fares. The vocal folk are very good to one another, and this worthy fellow sang for the benefit of his fellow-artists at least five-and-twenty times in the course of four weeks on the least remunerative of terms—namely, "free, gratis, and for nothing." Nor can it with justice be said of the renowned singers who, like himself, so generously give their services to their less celebrated colleagues, that they merely cast their bread upon the waters in the confident expectation that it will return to them after many days in the shape of gratuitous performances at their own *matinées* or "grand annual concerts;" for, in five cases of ten, those whom they thus assist are not qualified to figure as "great attractions" on a leading artist's programme, and only shine once a year by the reflected light of these charitable "stars."

Of the May *matinées* which I personally took cognizance of, I feel bound to make some slight mention in this place. In the words of the immortal commander of the *Mantlepiece*, "It is my duty, and I will!" On the 4th ult., Madlle. Lilas Spontini, a young Belgian lady of noble family, who chooses to be known by the above picturesque pseudonym, gave her first London concert at Messrs. Collard and Collard's rooms in Grosvenor Street, and sang three songs—one, a ballad of her own composition

named "His Footsteps"—with good taste and expression. She was supported by eight efficient vocalists and instrumentalists, not one of whose names (except that of Mr. Gibsone, the pianist) I had ever heard of before in connection with the art of music. Madlle. Spontini's fresh and flexible voice made a favourable impression upon her hearers, and earned for her their cordial plaudits. St. James's Hall was thronged on the 9th inst. by the admirers of Madlle. Clotilde Kleeberg—amongst whom I claim a foremost place—that admirable pianist's second pianoforte recital taking place on the date in question. The programme was an unusually long one, comprising ten *morçeaux* of the non-classical order, one more difficult than another, besides the whole of Bach's "Suite Anglaise" in A minor (six in number) and Beethoven's Sonata in D minor (opus 31, No. 2). How so slight and seemingly fragile a girl as Madlle. Kleeberg could fulfil so tremendous an undertaking without succumbing to sheer physical fatigue seemed to me little less than marvellous; but as a matter of fact, she played her last piece as well as her first, with a technical perfection displayed by few of her muscular magnates of the clavichord with whose feats the London musical public is familiar. Not only is this excellent pianist's execution faultless, but her readings of the masters' works are exceptionally intelligent and sympathetic. Taking it all round, there is no better playing to be heard in the concert-room than that of Clotilde Kleeberg, whose inborn musicality and indefatigable assiduity have placed her in the very front rank of contemporary pianists. Such *technique* as hers is indeed "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever."

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At the Beethoven Rooms, on May 14, Mdlle. Delphine Le Brun, a young lady whose extraordinary musical accomplishments deserve more general recognition than they have hitherto received in this metropolis, gave her annual morning concert in the presence of a numerous and distinguished gathering of music-lovers. In the grand aria from Massenet's "Hérodiade" ("Il est doux"), the *bénéficiaire* put forth a fine dramatic force, that reminded many of her hearers of Pauline Viardot in her best days, and a breadth of style seldom evinced by the younger singers of our day. She also sang a clever ballad by Roeckel and two Italian songs by Luigi Caracciolo and Madame Puzzi, with inimitable tenderness and grace. Another delightful feature of Mdlle. Le Brun's *matinée* was Isidore De Lara's poetical rendering of Caracciolo's exquisite song, "Alas!" and of his own no less beautiful composition, "Mine To-day," which has more than fulfilled the forecast I ventured to pronounce concerning it three months ago. I know of no greater treat obtainable in London at the present time than De Lara's singing; and his audience on the 14th ult. gave him abundant reason to understand that their admiration of his great talent was as keen and hearty as my own. Mdlle. Le Brun was moreover assisted by those excellent artists, Signori Bonetti, Zoboli, Bisaccia, and Garibaldi Paggi, and by Mesdames Hirlemann, Sanderini, and Zimeri. Offering these attractions, it goes without saying that her concert was a brilliant and unqualified success, as it fully deserved to be. So, I am glad to say, was Mdme. de Fonblanque's *matinée*, which came off on the 19th

ult. at 19, Harley Street. This gifted lady came out with an uncommonly strong cast, including Misses Mary Davies, Damian, and D'Alton, and Messrs. Maas, King, Lane, and Campbell, whose performances were ably conducted by my indefatigable friend, the Chevalier Ganz. Madame de Fonblanque sang as charmingly as Miss Ellen de Fonblanque was singing just a year ago. Can I say more in her praise? Surely not; for "none but herself can be her parallel." Amongst the novelties she introduced to her delighted audience (what a crowd of celebrities gathered together at her bidding, to be sure!) was a singularly sweet song by Wilfred Bendall, intituled, "When my love comes back." Mr. Maas lent the charm of his beautiful voice and fine delivery to a new ballad, "The Angel's Wing," by Signor Romili; and Mr. Bernard Lane made a decided hit by his musicianly interpretation of Mendelssohn's ever-green "Garland." The names of the other performers are sufficient guarantees for the excellence of their achievements. We are, indeed, fortunate in possessing such concert-room singers as Miss Mary Davies and Miss Damian. If any better ones exist, in their kind, it has not hitherto been my good fortune to hear them. The Richter Concerts have maintained their high reputation, undiminished in any respect. Dr. Hans has added an interesting number to his Wagnerian selections, besides producing another of Liszt's fanciful Rhapsodies, magnificently orchestrated and superbly played. These are the most noteworthy novelties of his 1885 Spring series of instrumental concerts, this year, as heretofore, a leading feature of the London musical season.

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Cruel May has struck down the venerable and highly-gifted Ferdinand Hiller, robbing the musical world of one of its brightest luminaries and myself of an old and valued friend. He was one of Nature's spoiled children, endowed with an unfair share of her "good things"—a fertile and ingenious composer, a delightful pianist, an admirable conductor, a brilliant writer of books and magazine articles, a sparkling humorist, and an inimitable *raconteur*. Throughout nearly sixty of his seventy-four years he was *fort répandu dans le monde*, and knew pretty nearly everybody worth knowing in Europe. At ten years old he was so clever a player as to have been pronounced "full of promise" by Hummel, who a little later on took him to Vienna, on purpose to bring him under Beethoven's personal notice. It was about that time, moreover, that his virtuosity on the piano so delighted Goethe that the great German poet addressed the following lines "To Ferdinand Hiller, the young pianist and composer, Hummel's pupil":—

Ein Talent, das Jedem frommt,
Hast Du in Besitz genommen:
Wer mit holden Toenen kommt
Ueberall ist Der willkommen.
Welch' ein glaenzendes Geleite
Ziehest an des Meisters Seite
Du erfreust Dich seiner Ehre
Er erfreut sich seiner Lehre.

In 1828, being then only seventeen (he was born in the great Comet Year), Hiller took up his abode in Paris, where he was soon admitted to the

leading musical circles, and became the intimate friend of Berlioz, Rossini, Chopin, Meyerbeer, Cherubini, and—last, though not least—Heinrich Heine. It was through Rossini's influence that his first opera (Romilda) was brought out at the Scala. Subsequently he became Mendelssohn's favourite companion and trusted friend. When Hiller's earliest oratorio was produced at Leipzig, the inimitable Felix conducted it in person, and maintained a copious correspondence with its composer until within a few days of his (Mendelssohn's) death. This correspondence is one of the chief treasures of Hiller's letter-books, thirty volumes of which he has bequeathed to "the Cologne Town-Library, or the Royal Library in Berlin, or some other institution of a similar character." His executors intend, as I understand, to hand them over to the Municipality of Cologne, the city in which he spent so many years of his life as Director of its magnificent Conservatoire, and from which he was, at the time of his death, in receipt of a handsome life-pension. The collection is not, however, to be published for five-and-twenty years to come, in compliance with a prohibition contained in his will.

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The last time I saw Ferdinand Hiller wield the bâton was at Bonn, in August, 1871, during the Beethoven Centenary Festival, at which my lamented friends Sterndale Bennett, Gruneisen and James Davison were also present. After the performance of the Choral Symphony, at the close of which the Kapellmeister was pelted with nosegays until he stood knee-deep in fragrant flowers, a grand adjournment of musicians and critics took place to the Assembly Rooms of the local club, where an incident occurred, so pleasantly illustrative of his exquisite tact and native geniality, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of recalling it to the memory of English musicians. Hiller, surrounded by "the English division," with Sterndale Bennett on his right hand, presided at the supper-table, his face beaming with contentment and glistening with perspiration. At an adjoining table were seated some fifty young ladies, clad in virgin white, who had sung in the choruses of the big symphony, and were hungrily awaiting their supper, whilst scarcely less greedily gazing upon their beloved leader and his distinguished foreign guests. Of a sudden, as though prompted by an irresistible impulse, Hiller rose to his feet and, turning towards his fair countrywomen, exclaimed "Listen to me, you German girls! You all play the piano, do you not? Of course you do. Well, then, you all know the works of Sterndale Bennett. Here he is! Look at him well. You will not often see such another musician. There, children, is what I have brought to you from foreign countries. Be ever thankful, in days to come, that you have seen with your own eyes that truly great composer and artist." It was a sight to see how all the eager girls stood on tiptoe and clapped their hands, ejaculating innumerable "Ach Gotts!" of delight. Everybody in the room, amongst them the leading musicians and journalists of the Fatherland, cheered the good Knight again and again, with triple thundering "Hochs!" till the bottles and glasses clinked and jingled on the tables *que c'etait un vrai plaisir!* Bennett was quite overwhelmed by the unexpected honours thus paid to him. All his German went out of his

head in his confusion, and he found himself utterly unable to express his gratitude in a language which had once been as familiar to him as his own. I may be permitted to add that I had the honour of doing so in his stead, as well as of subsequently returning thanks for the toast of the English Press, drunk with genuine enthusiasm by all present on that most interesting occasion.

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By the death of Franz Abt, Germany loses one of her most fertile song writers and genial composers of part-music for male voices. In the course of his long and prosperous musical career he published over three thousand songs, six hundred of which were arranged as quartets for the use of the innumerable Choral Unions that have sprung up during the past forty years in every part of the Fatherland, and in many States of the American Union, where Maennergesangvereine are now-a-days just as much national institutions as they are in the realms of the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg. Of Abt's later works many bore the stamp of hyper-æstheticism, and lacked the melodic spontaneity that characterized his youthful productions, which, it will be remembered by middle-aged musicians, achieved an extraordinary popularity in this country as well as in Germany, by reason of their refreshing tunefulness and simplicity of style. The songs he produced during the last decade of his life were at once thin and laboured; evidently excogitated with labour and pains, not thrown off with the rapidity that is prompted by inspiration. By their sale, however, he realized a handsome fortune, upon which he might have retired long ago from his official functions as Court Director of Music to the late Duke of Brunswick had he not preferred to continue labouring for the advancement of the art to which, as a matter of fact, his whole life was devoted. His thirty years' service as Hofkapellmeister was splendidly acknowledged, not only by his august master the Duke but by his fellow-countrymen in all parts of the German empire, who loaded him with presents and congratulatory addresses upon the occasion of his *Dienst-Jubilæum*. Amongst other testimonies of respect and admiration, he received nearly a hundred Diplomas of Honour from Choral Unions on either side of the Atlantic. In the year 1835, he was induced to visit America, and made a tour through the States, which resembled the triumphal progress of a victorious hero rather than the pleasure excursion of a celebrated song-writer. The tremendous enthusiasm characterizing his reception in certain cities, the population of which was largely composed of Germans, greatly surprised and embarrassed him, for Franz Abt was throughout life a man of singular modesty, amounting almost to shyness. About the time of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, Abt's songs began to be well known in London musical society; and a few years later his famous "When the swallows homeward fly," was on every concert-programme and barrel-organ in the United Kingdom. He has not tarried long after his old rival, Kuecken, whose death a few months ago is said to have affected Abt very painfully.

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

# Our Play-Box.

## "THE SHUTTLECOCK."

A "Farci-Drama, in Three Acts and a Song," written by H. J. BYRON and J. ASHBY-STERRY. Performed for the first time at Toole's Theatre, London, on the afternoon of Saturday, May 16, 1885.

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| Job Pill... ... ... ... ... | MR. J. L. TOOLE. | Gribbles ... ... ... | MR. W. BRUNTON. |
| Benj. Bottlejack... ... ... | MR. J. BILLINGTON. | Mrs. Bottlejack ... | MISS EMILY THORNE. |
| Capt. Collops ... ... ... | MR. E. D. WARD. | Araminta Perkins ... | MISS MARIE LINDEN. |
| Tankerey Teetum ... ... | MR. G. SHELTON. | Mrs. Pill ... ... ... | MISS ELIZA JOHNSTONE. |
| Fred Haythorpe... ... ... | MR. C. M. LOWNE. | Emily Spencer ... | MISS BLANCHE WOLSELEY. |
| Crabbery Crabshaw ... ... | MR. H. WESTLAND. | | |

"THE SHUTTLECOCK" as now played in the evening at Toole's Theatre is very different from "The Shuttlecock" as first performed there at an experimental matinée. In the latter case, it was by no means wholly a success. The first act went well, and was well received; but the second act was not far removed from chaos, the curtain falling on a particularly weak situation; nor did the third act make up altogether for the deficiencies of the second. Something of this partial failure was owing to the construction and dialogue of the second and third acts; something to apparent unpreparedness on the part of certain of the artists. It was clear that Mr. Ashby-Sterry would have to reconsider portions of the work, and it was equally clear that the performers had yet to do perfect justice to themselves and to the authors. It will now be admitted by those who witnessed the first performance that both the piece and the representation are much improved. The "song," which was lacking both in wit and humour, is now conspicuous by its absence; and that in itself is an advantage. The situation at the end of the second act is now entirely changed, Mrs. Pill's collapse at the supposed appearance of her "old love" being excised, and Job Pill being arrested on the charge of forgery. To be sure, it is not made evident how he disposed of the charge, which has no bearing whatever upon his ultimate fate; and, so far, the alteration is not perfectly defensible. But at least the close of the act has now a certain amount of relevance to the main plot of the piece. It is something that the curtain does not fall on a "picture" unconnected with the chief motive of the work. The introduction of Mrs. Pill's romantic recollection of the mystic Theodore was not at all a happy thought of Byron's (or Mr. Ashby-Sterry's), and the latter gentleman has shown good judgment in reducing the episode to the smallest dimensions. It is retained, but is much toned down. The second act is still further strengthened by the extension and elaboration of the parody—for such the "farci-drama" really is—of the story of Melnotte and Pauline. Job Pill now graciously presents a ring—Collop's ring—both to Araminta and Mrs. Bottlejack (the Pauline and Madame Deschapelles of the piece); and Crabbery Crabshaw (the new Damas) now interrogates Job Pill as to his knowledge of military matters, much as Damas "pumps" Melnotte as to his acquaintance with Italian. All this is much in favour of the "farci-drama," which is simply a burlesque modernization of "The Lady of Lyons,"

and, as such, eminently creditable to Byron's ingenuity. "The Shuttlecock" is, in this sense, a new departure. Byron took the idea of his "Courtship" from the casket scene in "The Merchant of Venice," but that (like Mr. Merivale's "Cynic") was a work of modernization only. In the case of "The Shuttlecock," the modernization is intentionally burlesque. "The Shuttlecock" is not merely a reduction of "The Lady of Lyons" to the level of every-day life—it is a *reductio ad absurdum*. And, such being the fact, much latitude must necessarily be given to the authors. We do not ask for probability in a rhymed burlesque; why should we ask for it in a burlesque in prose? Were "The Shuttlecock" either a "farce" or a "drama," we might reasonably object to the persistent punning indulged in by all the principal characters; but as it is solely and avowedly a travestie, extravagance is surely permissible. One must not complain of the number of the puns, but one may complain of their occasional badness. Captain Collops is made to say of a gardener and a tailor, that "one sows seeds, the other sews buttons; the seeds come up, the buttons come off;" and he is made to add, "Sew it seams"—a play upon words as obvious as it is ancient. Again, when "Laureate" is twisted into "Lor, he ate," it is time to offer a mild protest. The piece would still bear more weeding in this direction; and I cannot say I like the reference, in the second act, to certain living personages. This seems scarcely in good taste. But when all these objections have been made, "The Shuttlecock," as now represented, still remains an excellent production of its kind, and one from which much genuine amusement is to be extracted. It will, it is to be hoped, set a new dramatic fashion, impart a much-needed freshness to burlesque; and, in the meantime, it is irresistibly diverting. The travestie of the "great original" is throughout ingenious, and the dialogue contains certain repartees and *jeux de mots* which, if sometimes Mr. Ashby-Sterry's, are always worthy of Byron. Byron has, indeed, rarely been in a happier vein than that in which he conceived and wrote the opening act, and Mr. Ashby-Sterry has, on the whole, entered admirably into the spirit in which his dead friend evidently desired to work in this instance. The representation, too, leaves practically nothing to be desired. Mr. Toole has in Job Pill a part quite to his liking, and he has never done anything better in its way. The whole conception is admirable; the "make-up" is everywhere effective; and the delivery of the authors' quips and cranks is perfect in its humorous emphasis. Everybody, in fact, ought to see Mr. Toole as Job Pill; it is a masterpiece of genuine burlesque. Next to it in artistic merit I should place Miss Johnstone's Mrs. Pill, which, however, is not so meritorious in the third act as in the first. Miss Linden and Miss Thorne play with praiseworthy earnestness, and Mr. Ward at least looks well as the Captain. He speaks his lines, however, with too evident an appreciation of the word-plays with which they are weighted.

W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

## "THE SILVER SHIELD."

A New and Original Comedy, in Three Acts, by SYDNEY GRUNDY. Produced at a matinée, under the direction of MISS AMY ROSELLE, at the Strand Theatre, on Tuesday, May 19, 1885.

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|---|---|---|---|
| Sir Humphrey Chetwynd ... ... ... ... | MR. JOHN BEAUCHAMP. | Dodson Dick ... ... ... | MR. C. GROVES. |
| Dr. Dyonisius Dozey... | MR. RUTLAND BARRINGTON. | Alma Blake ... ... ... | MISS AMY ROSELLE. |
| Tom Potter ... ... ... | MR. ARTHUR DACRE. | Mrs. Dozey ... ... ... | MRS. LEIGH MURRAY. |
| Ned Chetwynd ... ... | MR. W. HERBERT. | Susan ... ... ... ... | MISS JULIA ROSELLE. |
| | | Wilson ... ... ... ... | MISS F. LAVENDER. |
| | | Lucy Preston... ... ... | MISS KATE RORKE. |

To the author who has devoted days and weeks and months of anxious thought and care to the construction of his play it must be truly gratifying to find its first presentation received with general enthusiasm by an audience of the highest intelligence, and the most critical that could be assembled in a theatre.

The profound attention, the sympathetic silence, the laughter, and applause which accompany the progress of the performance must be to him sweet recompense for all his toil. The congratulatory cheers, so hearty and so spontaneous, that greet his appearance before the curtain must, one would imagine, dispel from his mind all doubts and fears concerning the success of his work. But it is hardly so. The author has to run another gauntlet yet. That "malignant deity" the critic has not had *his* say. True, he has been seen to join the public in its signals of approval. He has cried "Bravo!" and clapped his hands at periods of the play. But what of that? He has only been carried along by the excited crowd. Wait till he gets away from the shouts of the pit and the glare of the footlights; wait till he sits down in cold blood to reconsider and pass judgment upon what he has witnessed on the stage—sometimes, it would appear, to write an apology for the applause to which he has himself contributed.

Wait, sanguine author, wait till the clouds of night roll by and the morning papers appear. Then, it may be, you will find your bright hopes blighted. The pleasure you believed you had afforded the public you will see disclaimed by the press. The applause which yesterday was such unction to your soul is to-day declared to have been nothing but the empty sound of flattery. You are told, "There is no money in your piece;" you will begin to fear that all your labour has been in vain.

Such thoughts may arise in the minds of those who consider all the circumstances attending the production of Mr. Sydney Grundy's latest play.

That the construction of "The Silver Shield" must have occasioned its author much wearying thought and care, and that the magnificent reception accorded it at the Strand Theatre must have been most gratifying to him, go without saying. But that certain critics have thought fit, in some instances entirely to discount the applause bestowed upon the play, and in others to damn with faint praise, venturing poor auguries of its future, must naturally have been very disappointing and galling to the anxious author. Doubtless, however, like Sir Philip Sidney, Mr. Grundy will "weigh not so much what men say as what they prove." To him his critics may appear like the foolish knights of the fable, tilting at each other on the question of composition. I, for one, would venture to pronounce "The Silver Shield"

to be of rich sterling metal. The superficial scratches and dents which only the keen eye of criticism discovers should themselves be held as evidence of the soundness of the work. The skilled hand that fashioned it may, if it will, find no difficulty in remedying such flaws as have been seen to mar its brilliancy. Nor should his spirit be vexed when candid opinion points out certain blemishes.

The plain truths which, in this comedy, Mr. Grundy tells so boldly are probably such as some persons do not like to hear told at all. Such persons, being themselves vexed by the discovery, seem to imagine that society at large will have no pleasure in their revelation. They argue that the truth which calls forth the ejaculation, "Alas! too true!" is better left unpublished, whilst only such as is sublime and beautiful should be illustrated on the stage. With such a proposition doubtless many will agree. Unquestionably, we all prefer to gaze upon the silken side of the world's apparel. Yet are we all more or less creatures of curiosity, inclined now and then to examine the seamy side of things. Is curiosity, then, a crime that it should never be gratified? After all, what is there so very *seamy* in Mr. Grundy's play? Does it indeed contain any fact condemnatory of our faith in the existence of good?—any character so ignoble, any thought so uncharitable, as to sour us with life and harden our hearts against its nobler instincts? Let me confess I fail to recognize such. Let us for an instant question the author's motive. What is the moral he has striven to point? Is it anything more savage than this—the folly of too hastily jumping at conclusions? Doubtless in real life, in nine cases out of ten, a man chancing to find, as Tom Potter does in this play, a letter from his wife which reads like a sentence of expulsion from her presence for ever would, instead of immediately accepting his *congé*, make some inquiry into so momentous a matter. Nor can it be considered a greater probability that a young, loving wife should fly from her husband because she has discovered lying open upon his desk a paper which seems to compromise her happiness and honour, when a moment's reflection would remind her that her husband is engaged in writing a play which is not unlikely to contain a heroine. But, then, are we not told that love is blind? And do we not all know to what strange ends a woman's impetuosity will lead her? Besides, it is not from the nine conventional men or women that a dramatist takes his characters; it is the exceptional tenth he seeks to aid him in his plot. It then remains for the author to show his skill in accounting for or excusing extraordinary actions, and in making possibilities appear not improbable. This, I contend, Mr. Grundy has achieved, at any rate sufficiently well for the general purpose of interesting ordinary playgoers, whose perception of extravagance he has dimmed by the clever complications which arise out of those two false and foolish moves on which his story rests.

For instance, it should not be overlooked how, before Lucy Preston discovers the fatal letter, jealous doubts have been shown to have taken root in her mind through the familiarity existing between her author-husband and her actress-friend. And thus, womanlike, she does not hesitate to construe that writing as confirmation of her worst suspicion.

One fact not so easy to explain away is that this impetuous young lady should afterwards be found living in the very same house in London as Alma Blake, the woman who has been the cause of all her trouble. Yet are not coincidents as marvellous as even this to be met with in real life? If so, the dramatist cannot be said to exceed his licence in bringing about such a circumstance when he finds it necessary to his plot. Nor will his work fail because of this or any other similar point of weak construction.

It has been very generally questioned whether a play which introduces so much of the theatrical element is likely to be acceptable to the general public. It has been said that the world does not want to be dragged behind the footlights; that it is not concerned to know how business is transacted between managers and actors and actresses. If this be so, how comes it that we find society to-day knows already so much about such matters, and still continues to delight in the increase of such knowledge? For good or evil, it is certain that the stage and all therewith connected is the topic of the time, the feature of the age. On this account I doubt if Mr. Sydney Grundy will be found to have made a great mistake in flavouring his modern comedy with such popular spice. But, judging from the first performance, he has perhaps applied the spice in rather a careless and rough-handed manner. For example, the theatrical manager, Mr. Dodson Dick, may possibly be the type of a character that has been, but assuredly is now extinct. Even if such a bore still existed, either as manager, cheesemonger, or what not, did he behave in such an outrageous manner as Dodson Dick is made to do in the house of Sir Humphrey Chetwynd he would be immediately kicked off the premises. Turning from the stage to the Church, Mr. Grundy has not been more flattering in his clerical portrait. Dr. Dyonisius Dozey, with his incessant cant and humbug, is a most unwelcome and obtrusive individual; so much so that it is hard to understand how even his weak-minded host, Sir Humphrey, endured his presence for five minutes. Equally objectionable is the reverend Doctor's wife, Diana, with her impertinent prudery. These characters, as they appeared before us, were in my view ugly disfigurements to "The Silver Shield." They represented some of the flaws which I have previously remarked may easily be remedied. Mr. Dodson Dick and Dr. and Mrs. Dozey are something more than useless elaborations; they are essentials to the scene, and so may not be bodily removed, but they will be, let us hope, toned down ere they make their reappearance. At present they must be judged below the level of social possibility.

Space here forbids further analysis of this interesting play, save but to add a word of the highest praise of the clever dialogue, which throughout is written in the same vigorous, concise, and soundly epigrammatic style that ever distinguishes the works of this author.

Mr. Grundy is heartily to be congratulated on the result of this preliminary trial, the success of which will, I venture to predict, be fully ratified when "The Silver Shield" is placed in the regular bill of the Comedy Theatre, as I understand it will be at an early date. The performance throughout was excellent beyond any we have been accustomed to witness

at matinées. Never has Miss Amy Roselle appeared to greater advantage than she does as Alma Blake, the somewhat vain but ever good-natured heroine. Her acting, especially her repose at the end of act ii., when she in a lengthy soliloquy strives to unriddle the mystery of her young friend Lucy's strange behaviour, displayed consummate art. Miss Kate Rorke more than fulfilled the bright promise she has shown from the time she first appeared upon the stage. That she would make her mark has long been foretold. Here came the opportunity, and splendidly did she grasp it. Seldom has a young actress displayed such depth and power of art as that shown by Miss Rorke when she discovers what she supposes to be her husband's treachery. This was the hit of the matinée, and was acknowledged by rapturous applause. Mr. John Beauchamp presented an admirable stage portrait of the old baronet, Sir Humphrey Chetwynd; and his son, Ned Chetwynd, could not possibly have had a better representative than Mr. W. Herbert. Mr. Rutland Barrington deserves high praise for his original creation of the prosy parson. It is specially to the actor's credit that he rendered Dr. Dozey quite distinct from his Dr. Daly of "The Sorcerer;" but much of the effect of his acting was marred by a poor get-up. He looked far too young and unimportant for his position. Mr. Dodson Dick was ably represented by that clever character-actor, Mr. C. Groves. Mr. Arthur Dacre's Tom Potter was much too sombre and sententious. Mrs. Leigh Murray made Mrs. Dozey as agreeable as she possibly could be.

CUNNINGHAM BRIDGMAN.

# Our Omnibus-Box.

SOME people are never satisfied. No wonder good plays are so very seldom written when their best points or most beautiful ideas are ignored or misunderstood by those who have to write about them. Whenever the acting of Miss Ellen Terry is discussed in reference to Olivia, it is quite impossible to pass over that beautiful scene where the girl who has promised her lover to depart with him, and who is supposed by her family to be starting on a long journey with her father the next morning, gives away her little presents to her assembled family and strives through her blinding tears to "take farewell of all she loved." A happier inspiration than this has very seldom occurred to a dramatist. It is a scene absolutely natural and sympathetic. The Primrose family think that Olivia's grief is caused by her proposed departure for York the next morning; she knows that her anguish is caused by the deception to which she is lending herself. Exquisite ideas come out of the primary dramatic notion. The terrible strain of kissing for the last time each member of the family, the sisters, the mother, the brothers; the instant resolve not to bid farewell to her old father, and

then the resolution breaking down at the last minute; finally, the most charming scene of all, when at the evening hour, the family circle assembled, the old father at the fireside, the mother at her work, the others singing a peaceful song at the harpsichord, the guilty and pale-faced Olivia looks in at the window on her "ruined home," and steals away into the night. If plays are to have beautiful ideas and to suggest higher thoughts than those of green-room gossip and theatrical tittle-tattle, this surely is a beautiful idea. It elevates, it does not depress.

Yet how is it treated in description, or rather, how does it strike some minds that are supposed to be interested by the art of the dramatist and the actor? Thus: "At the close of the second act," says one writer, "when she is taking leave of her unconscious family—*a scene dragged in by the playwright, but the unnaturalness of which we completely forget*—while Miss Terry is playing it," &c. &c. Well, if this scene is dragged into the play, and if this homely picture is unnatural, we should like to hear the writer's opinion of what is natural and relevant in dramatic art. It seems to me that a more natural position than this, as between Olivia and her family, has seldom occurred to a dramatist. There is a current theory amongst pessimists that what is ideal and imaginative in art is seldom natural. Because the Olivias of Clapham and the Brixton Road don't do what Goldsmith's Olivia is represented to do when they run away with their young men, therefore the scene is unnatural. The modern mind cannot grasp it. Even the intellectual writer sneers at it. And yet such things do occur. I remember I was sent down to the country some years ago to describe a "ruined home." A father, as passionately fond of his child as was the Vicar of Wakefield was of his daughter, had struck her seducer dead with a blow from an iron hammer, when the men were working side by side in their workshop in Clerkenwell. The mother told me the story in a little rose-covered cottage a few miles out of London, taken by the affectionate father for his children—the scene of the love-making between this modern Olivia and working-man Thornhill. Amidst many delicate touches of Nature, one struck me as being particularly pathetic. After the poor girl's ruin, and before her sad secret was known, she refused to sit down to the family meal with the assembled family. Already she felt mysteriously that she was an outcast. She idolized her father, and she would not insult him further with her soiled presence! The girl's mother told me how her daughter used to frame excuses so as to absent herself from the table. She would occupy herself in the household affairs, serve, or wash up. But she would not eat with them any more. Now, if this human trait were introduced by Mr. Wills, or by Mr. Anyone else, in a play, we should be told that it had been "dragged in," and that it was "unnatural." But for all that it was perfectly true.

On the same evening that I read how unnatural is Miss Terry's "farewell scene" in "Olivia," I am told elsewhere that the critics were all wrong who deplore the fact that a dramatist so able and a writer so caustic as Mr. Sydney Grundy should occupy so much space in his last original play with the trivial details of minor theatrical life. The boorish manager who is rude to his leading lady, the jealous actress who quarrels with her bread

and butter, the little pettiness and spite of the green-room and the managerial sanctum, the slang and the *argot* of the stage are reproduced very faithfully by Mr. Grundy, but a man of such commanding intelligence has surely observed character outside the walls of a theatre. The "shop" of theatrical life is wearisome enough as we meet it in our daily walks without having it served up as the *pièce de résistance* in every clever play. "The purpose of playing, whose end both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to Nature, to show Nature her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time her form and pressure." In dramatic art this, then, is the ideal. A writer who discusses playing cannot be far wrong when he gets as near the ideal as possible. But this view is combated at every turn. "I notice," says one, "that nearly all the critics express a doubt as to whether a play that contains so much of the theatrical element is likely to prove acceptable to the general public. Such doubt may be diminished if not dispelled by the fact that there is absolutely no topic so popular at the present time as the stage and all connected with it." Quite right; it is only too true, but how far has dramatic art benefited by this uncanny association? How far has the theatre gained in public esteem, now that it can be written of it thus :—

> The play, the play's on every mind
> No matter where I go,
> I really am surprised to find
> How much the people know
> Of actresses and actors' lives.
> Their joys, their strifes, their cares,
> In fact, society now strives
> To rule its life by theirs !

Does it indeed? I very much doubt it. There is a certain unwholesome familiarity with the private lives of stage folk. But the people know only the worst side of their life and not the best. Their weaknesses, their temptations, their vanities, are shown up, but seldom their better qualities. The public is seldom asked to respect players by means of the gossipy paragraphs they evidently like so much. They are offensively called by their familiar names, they are alternatively patted on the back or kicked out of the way, but there are very few who represent, as Robertson did, the honest, homely, Polly Eccles side of stage-life. I may be wrong, but in spite of its undoubted humour, I do not think that the details of theatrical life in Mr. Grundy's clever play will lead those who see it to respect the theatrical calling. I don't even suppose that he had any such object in view. He is a cynic, and cynics don't trouble themselves about people's feelings. When will certain writers understand that the playgoing public is not wholly composed of members of theatrical clubs or the devourers of spicy paragraphs. The clubs and the paragraphs are attractive missionaries, but their gospel is not one of brotherly love, of sweetness, or of light. There are still some old-fashioned people who deplore this new union between stage folk and the professors of "irresponsible frivolity." It increases familiarity; but then, as the copy-books used to tell us, "Familiarity breeds contempt."

In connection with the capital and clever "Silver Shield," by Mr. Sydney Grundy, which is to be produced ere long at the Comedy Theatre, there is one point on which the author has been accidentally misrepresented. A separation occurs between a young dramatic author and his sensitively jealous little wife. The rupture is brought about as follows:—The wife finds on her husband's desk a love-letter, which is, in reality, directly connected with the play on which he is engaged. Now it was assumed by all who watched the play on its first representation, that the love-letter was drafted on the ordinary manuscript paper lying on the author's desk, and that in such circumstances the wife must have been morbidly jealous indeed to assume that the letter was a real one and not a fiction. Mr. Grundy, however, assures me that he took particular care to explain that the letter was apart from the play manuscript, and was drafted on an ordinary sheet of note-paper. That no doubt makes a difference; but all difficulty would be removed if the love-letter were discovered anywhere but on the very desk at which the wife knows her husband is composing a play. Let her find it on his dressing-table or in his waistcoat-pocket.

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Arrangements have been made for producing "The Great Pink Pearl," by Mr. R. C. Carton and Mr. Cecil Raleigh, at the Prince's Theatre, directly Mrs. Langtry's successful season is brought to a close in July. It will be remembered that the play was very successfully produced at a morning performance, and I am assured that it is absolutely original. It is the work of a long and anxious year.

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The indefatigable Mr. W. G. Wills is still hard at work, and every one will be glad to hear of it, for of him may truly be said, "Nihil tetigit quod non onnavit." Besides the "Young Tramp," soon to be produced at a morning performance by Mrs. Langtry, Mr. Wills has written an original play for Miss Mary Anderson, and has been commissioned to write a poetical tragedy for Mr. Henry Irving.

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Mr. Alfred Thompson is winning laurels in America, and went over just in time to superintend the archæological revivalism inspired by Mr. Henry Irving's visit. Mr. Thompson is mounting, arranging, and decorating "The Comedy of Errors," to be sumptuously produced in New York in September.

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A note on "The Faithful Shepherdess." This is the work of John Fletcher (1576–1625) alone, his friend and fellow-dramatist, Francis Beaumont, having no share in it. The pastoral was first printed without date, but probably in 1610 or 1611. On the occasion of its first performance it met with an ill reception. It was, however, afterwards represented with greater success before the Queen of Charles the First on Twelfth Night,

1633, by Joseph Taylor (one of the first impersonators of Hamlet) and other actors, as appears by Shakerley Marmyon's lines prefixed to the third (1634) edition of the pastoral. It was witnessed, in the same year, by the King. It was then introduced by a dialogue, between a priest and a nymph, written by Sir William Davenant, and it closed with an epilogue, which was spoken by the Lady Mary Mordaunt. The performance was afterwards repeated "divers times" at the Blackfriars Theatre. Later on in the century, good Samuel Pepys witnessed the work. On October 14, 1668, he notes in his diary: "To the King's playhouse, and saw 'The Faithful Shepherdess,' that I might hear the French eunuch sing; which I did to my great content: though I do admire his acting as much as his singing, being both beyond all I ever saw or heard." On April 26 of the same year, Mr. Pepys again saw "The Faithful Shepherdess" at the King's Theatre. "But, Lord!" he writes, "what an empty house, there not being, as I could tell the people, so many as to make up above £10 in the whole house! But I plainly discern the musick is the better, by how much the house the emptier."

Critical authorities differ as to the merit of "The Faithful Shepherdess." According to Hazlitt, it "'is a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets, where no crude surfeit reigns.' The author has in it given a loose to his fancy, and his fancy was his most delightful and genial quality, where, to use his own words:—

> He takes most ease, and grows ambitious,
> Thro' his own wanton fire and pride delicious.

The songs and lyrical descriptions throughout are luxuriant and delicate in a high degree. He came near to Spenser in a certain tender and voluptuous sense of natural beauty; he came near to Shakespeare in the playful and fantastic expression of it. The whole composition is an exquisite union of dramatic and pastoral poetry; where the local descriptions receive a tincture from the sentiments and purposes of the speaker, and each character, cradled in the lap of Nature, paints her 'virgin fancies wild' with romantic grace and classic elegance." On the other hand, Schlegel thinks that in writing this pastoral the dramatist "did violence to his natural talent. Perhaps he had the intention of surpassing Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' but the composition which he has ushered into the world is as heavy as that of the other was easy and aërial. The piece is overcharged with mythology and rural painting, is untheatrical, and, so far from portraying the genuine ideality of a pastoral world, it even contains the greatest vulgarities. We might rather call it an immodest eulogy of chastity." The German critic, I am inclined to think, was a little mistaken in his judgment.

The scene of "The Faithful Shepherdess" and its employments are thus (act i. sc. 3) described by Chloe to Thenot:—

> There be woods as green
> As any; air likewise as fresh and sweet
> As where smooth Zephyrus plays on the fleet
> Face of the curled streams, with flowers as many
> As the young spring gives, and as choice as any

"How do you do?"
THE PRIVATE SECRETARY.

Maude Gillett.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE," BY BARRAUD,
263 OXFORD STREET, W.

"You don't suppose, as a humane man, I'd have accepted the post of Lord High Executioner if I hadn't thought the duties were purely nominal?"

THE MIKADO.

Geo. Grossmith

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE," BY BARRAUD, 263 OXFORD STREET, W.

There be all new delights, cool streams and wells,
Arbours o'ergrown with woodbine; caves, and dells;
Choose where thou wilt, whilst I sit by and sing,
Or gather rushes, to make many a ring
For thy long fingers; tell thee tales of love,
How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,
First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes
She took eternal fire that never dies;
How she conveyed him softly in a sleep,
His temples bound with poppy, to the steep
Head of old Latmus, where she stoops each night,
Gilding the mountain with her brother's light,
To kiss her sweetest.

In his excellent "Dramatic Miscellanies," published in 1783, Thomas Davies says: "Without considerable alterations, fine music, gay scenes, beautiful decorations, and excellent performers, I would not hazard 'The Faithful Shepherdess' upon a London stage in these cultivated times." Whether or not all these conditions for success will be fulfilled in the promised representation of Fletcher's pastoral at Coombe House remains to be seen. The necessary alterations, however, have been made, I am given to understand, by a practised playwright, the scenery will be supplied by Nature herself, and Mr. E. W. Godwin is responsible for the costumes and other "decorations."

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Miss Maude Millett, whose photograph appears in this number of The Theatre, is the daughter of the late Colonel Hugh Ley Millett, of the Bengal Army, and was born at Rajanpûr, in the Punjaub, in November, 1867. She made her first appearance on the stage as Sebastian in "Twelfth Night." She has since played, amongst others, the following parts:—Muriel Hepburn in "Stage-land;" Jessie Blake in "On Guard;" Mary Mason in "Heroes;" Anna Maria Poppytop in "The Wedding March," and Blanche d'Evrau in "Our Bitterest Foe." She was engaged, a year ago, by Mr. C. H. Hawtrey to play Eva Webster in "The Private Secretary," a part she is still acting at the Globe Theatre. Miss Maude Millett is a bright and promising young actress. Although she has been on the stage so short a time, she has already displayed much ability, and won much favour with the general public.

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Mr. George Grossmith, whose photograph in character also appears in this number, is a son of the late George Grossmith, a well-known lecturer. Mr. Grossmith, jun., was for many years a reporter in the law courts, which he attended with a view of ultimately entering the legal profession. Being, however, possessed of considerable musical ability, at the suggestion of Professor Pepper he exchanged the toil of the courts for more inviting repose afforded by the Polytechnic Institution. There, in 1869, he made his *début* as a public entertainer in the school of the late John Parry; and in the following year went on tour with Mr. and Mrs. Howard Paul. Subsequently, Mr. Grossmith visited many hundred of Provincial Literary and Mechanics' Institutions, in conjunction with his father, and on his own account, giving recitations, interspersed with songs and

character sketches. In 1876–7 he produced an entertainment, with Miss Florence Marryat, entitled "Entre Nous," for which he wrote and composed the successful musical comedietta entitled "Cups and Saucers." It is Mr. Grossmith's custom to give recitals at private houses, and on one of these occasions he attracted the notice of Sir Arthur Sullivan, who persuaded him to undertake the part of John Wellington Wells, in Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera of "The Sorcerer," produced at the Opéra Comique, on November 17, 1877, by the Comedy Opera Company, Mr. R. D'Oyly Carte being the manager. Mr. Grossmith has since appeared in all Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's operas produced at the Opéra Comique and Savoy Theatres. His parts in these operas, and the dates of production, are as follows:—The Right Hon. Joseph Porter, K.C.B., in "H.M.S. Pinafore," on May 25, 1878; Major-General Stanley, in "The Pirates of Penzance," on April 3, 1880; Reginald Bunthorne, in "Patience," on April 23, 1881; the Lord Chancellor, in "Iolanthe," on November 25, 1882; King Gama, in "Princess Ida," on January 5, 1884; and Ko-Ko, in "The Mikado," on March 14, 1885. Mr. Grossmith has at various times written and composed several entertainments, songs, and slight musical pieces, the latest of which is "The Great Tay-Kin," written by Mr. Arthur Law, composed by Mr. George Grossmith, and brought out at Toole's Theatre, on April 30.

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A correspondent sends the following additional notes on the late John Ryder:—"Playgoers must be grateful to Mr. Henry Turner for his article in your last issue, entitled 'Recollections of Ryder.' But will not dramatic students feel that his observation of that actor, extending over forty years, and aided by personal intercourse, must enable him to tell far more than he has yet told us? Ryder's art deserved careful consideration. It gave us of to-day a means of guessing what acting was in former times, and under conditions widely different from our own. Perhaps a few wholly personal impressions concerning Ryder's acting may be acceptable, although coming from a younger man than Mr. Turner; and may possibly induce Mr. Turner, or some other gentleman whose information and discernment exceed my own, to correct my crudities, and write an adequate record of our old friend.

"I first saw Ryder in the cast of 'Macbeth' at Drury Lane. This was not during the Falconer and Chatterton era in 1864, when Phelps played Macbeth, Creswick, Macduff, and Miss Helen Faucit, Lady Macbeth. It was on a later visit, two or three years afterwards (the huge old play-bill is not dated); and Mrs. Howard Paul doubled the Lady and Hecate, and Phelps and Dillon halved, if I may coin a phrase, Macbeth—that is, they played the part on alternate nights. Ryder was Macduff; and hoarseness, to which he was liable, sadly interfered with his success. In his prime, Ryder's voice was probably fine; but during the whole of my recollection it was much worn, wanting tone and edge. He looked very large as Macduff, though he had a taller opponent in Phelps than formerly in Charles Kean, as mentioned by Mr. Turner; and, owing to his habit of knitting his exceptionally heavy brow, he seemed to me very angry.

"In April, 1868, Mr. Toole took his benefit at the Queen's Theatre, in Long Acre, then under the management of Alfred Wigan, playing in 'Paul Pry,' 'Ici,' and in 'Oliver Twist'—'dramatised expressly for this theatre, in three acts, by John Oxenford, Esq.' Ryder was Fagin, appearing, I think, only in the scene in which Oliver is brought to the thieves' den. Mr. Toole was the Dodger; Mr. John Clayton and Mr. Henry Irving, both members of the company, played respectively Monks and Bill Sikes.

"At the Queen's, in March, 1870, Mr. E. J. Young produced Tom Taylor's historical drama, 'Twixt Axe and Crown,' with Mr. and Mrs. Rousby. Ryder was stage-manager. For the first time I saw this actor to advantage. As Simon Renard, with a black Spanish suit and long rapier, with pointed beard, and black hair brushed straight up from a sallow forehead, Ryder's aspect was striking. His outward manner was reserved and courtly; his secret glance was full of malignity. The envoy preserved his composure to the last, and received his dismissal with an obsequious bow. The acting was full of grave comedy; and, as such, was in strange contrast to the Gardiner of Henry Marston. This was another old actor who had done much excellent work; but who seemed without the capacity for humour that underlies all first-rate acting, comic or serious.

"The following September, again at the Queen's, then in Mr. E. Clifton's hands, was the memorable production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' 'under the direction of Mr. Ryder.' It was the most complete and beautiful Shakespearian performance I had seen, and I watched it minutely three times. Phelps was Bottom; Frank Matthews, Quince; Mr. George Rignold, Lysander; and Marston, Egeus. The Theseus of Ryder was as dignified and gracious as could be desired. His majestic bearing and stately elocution impressed themselves deeply on both eye and ear.

"'As You Like It' was brought out at the same house in February, 1871, with Mrs. Rousby as Rosalind, and Ryder as Touchstone. Here was a character quite outside his usual bounds, and he gave a very interesting and clever performance. His Touchstone had dignity, and conveyed a sense of mastery. He dealt with the rustics from a high intellectual standpoint. He was worthy to converse with the banished Duke and his retainers. No one will suspect Ryder of having been exactly droll; but his jester had the air of a man bred at Court, and this some low comedians fail to convey in Touchstone.

"In November of that year 'The Tempest' was placed upon the same boards. Ryder's Prospero was imposing in appearance and speech; but my notes mention the old malady of hoarseness. I saw one more play at the Queen's under Ryder's stage-management. That was 'The Last Days of Pompeii,' a spectacular piece prepared by Mr. Oxenford, in which Ryder played Arbaces.

"A few years later, in 1876, Ryder made a provincial tour with a young lady pupil, whose career I have not followed, but who certainly was not Miss Neilson nor Miss Wallis. 'Henry VIII.' and 'Macbeth' were in the bills. Ryder's Wolsey was magnificent in appearance, and his manner was as stately as ever. There was Nature and careful detail when he

pondered his schemes of aggrandizement. The farewell had pathos. But he grew inaccurate in the words, from lapse of memory or carelessness. His Macbeth startled at first by the successful representation of vigorous manhood. But the strain of playing the part was evident, and the impersonation became mechanical. But the tragedy was produced for the sake of the pupil; and it would be unreasonable to blame the old actor for coming short of the vigour and poetry of the Macbeth of Phelps or Mr. Irving.

"It must have been felt on all hands that Ryder was exactly in his right place when he appeared with Mr. Edwin Booth at the Princess's in 1880 and 1881. It was an excellent thing to see the veteran enacting the Ghost, Father Joseph, and Brabantio; and Mr. Booth was fortunate in securing such able support. These were the last times I saw Ryder.

"As an elocutionist Ryder ranked high. His style had simple breadth, was masculine, but of little delicacy. He spoke right on, with few breaks of any kind; and the ear grew accustomed to his conventional inflections in the delivery of blank verse, as to the familiar cadences in Handel's music. The effect was workmanlike, lucid, and, as far as it went, satisfactory. Occasionally it was agreeable; as when contrasted with the strangely elaborate and artificial elocution of Henry Marston. I well remember his stalking through a long soliloquy of self-accusation and remorse in Leah, with no visible interest in his work; though, truly, the carpenters were doing their worst behind, setting the next scene. Take, again, the passage in 'She Stoops to Conquer,' in which Hardcastle's forbearance breaks down, and he rebukes the supposed insolence of the young man. Here Mr. Chippendale's sweet dignity and fatherly grief were things to love. Ryder rapidly paid out the words with abundant energy, but the beauty of scene was gone.

"The limits of the actor's abilities were soon reached. But sensible playgoers valued Ryder for his long service and great experience; and his commanding figure and eagle countenance will not soon pass from memory. No man could scowl as Ryder. But then came the solemn roll of the head and the gracious smile, like sunshine from behind a thunder cloud.

"Ryder, I believe, seldom appeared in leading parts, and will be chiefly remembered as the sturdy support of men of higher grade—Macready, Charles Kean, Fechter, and Edwin Booth. In summing up these personal impressions, he seems to stand best in characters in which I have seen no other actor. In Macduff he was inferior to Mr. Creswick; in Touchstone, to the elder Compton; in Hardcastle, to Mr. Chippendale; and in the Ghost and Brabantio, to Mr. Mead. But, taking him at his best, as Simon Renard, Theseus and Wolsey, I remember him as one of the stateliest actors that have graced the modern stage."

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Our Melbourne correspondent writes:—

"Cinderella," produced at our Theatre Royal on Boxing night, is still running, and will not be taken off before Good Friday, thus having a clear run of eighty-four nights, and one which has only once been beaten.

Its success has been due to the excellent cast and the splendour of the scenery and appointments. Lecocq's opera, "La Petite Mademoiselle," will be put on on Easter Saturday, and Miss Emma Chambers and Signor Brocolini will be entrusted with prominent rôles. The Opera House pantomime, "Sindbad the Sailor," had an uneventful run till Feb. 13; and on St. Valentine's Day, "My Partner" was revived with Mr. George Rignold and Mr. Brian Darley as the partners. On March 7, "Amos Clark" was revived; and on March 21, "Clancarty" was tried. "My Partner" is to be played again to-night (March 25), and on Saturday the long-expected "Called Back" will be submitted to a colonial audience. "Confusion" did enormous business at the Bijou Theatre, and ran from Boxing Night to the end of February. A comedy by a local author, "Fortune's Wheel," purporting to be a sequel to H. J. Byron's "Weak Woman," had a trial for a few nights without success. On Saturday, March 7, the Majeronis revived "Fédora," which is at present running. Mr. G. A. Sala delivered his first lecture in these colonies on Monday last, at the Town Hall Messrs. George Leitch and James MacMahon have had a very good. season in Hobart, Tasmania, with "Confusion" and "The Silver King." Mr. MacMahon is now taking those two pieces round New Zealand. Miss Geneviève Ward has just concluded a highly successful New Zealand tour, and opens next in Adelaide on the 18th prox. Miss Marie de Grey and "Fun on the Bristol" are touring also in that country. The only pantomime in Sydney, "Little Red Riding Hood," at the Royal, was a failure, and "Nita's First" and "Written in Sand" soon replaced it. Mr. H. H. Vincent made his reappearance in "Nita's First." "Haunted Lives" is now the attraction at that theatre. The Dunning Opera Company, with Miss Annette Ivanovna and Mr. T. B. Appleby as leads, are playing at the Gaiety; and "Confusion" is being played at the Opera House. Messrs. Rignold and Allison also have a "Confusion" company on tour in the interior. Luscombe Searelle's new opera, "Bobadil," a big hit in Sydney, is now being sung at the Theatre Royal, Adelaide. Mr. Frederick Boyle, a new tenor from your part of the world, arrived last week. The old Princess's Theatre in this city is to be pulled down, and a first-class one built in its place.

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To write even a few lines about the Paris Salon seems a stupendous undertaking when one is confronted by the two thousand four hundred and eighty-eight oil paintings which form only part of this year's exhibit; but, in a very superficial and light fashion an outsider may scribble a few lines where a professional critic would succumb. Lightness in French criticism, however, is the order of the day. The leading essayists vie with the authors of the comic *brochures* in their endeavours to produce palatable diet for a laughter-loving reading public; and one is moved to pity the artists whose work, often admirable and almost always conscientious, is dismissed in a few words of patronizing praise, or made the nucleus of more or less witty but totally irrelevant writing. For instance, M. Bonnat's largest picture is the "Martyrdom of St. Denis," which represents the saint stooping to replace the head which has just been struck off by the executioner. The blood which

is smeared on the steps and the headless bodies of the earlier victims may perhaps be deemed a little too realistic to form a pleasing addition to a private room, but it is impossible to refuse to admit that the spirited attitudes and nice arrangement of colour are deserving of serious attention. This, however, is not the view taken by the critic of the *XIX^ième^ Siècle*, for in his eyes the whole scene is but a feeble imitation of the Hanlon-Lees! His description of Bonnat's work is clever and amusing, but were our English art-critics to dispose of Leighton or Millais in a similar fashion, their respective editors might very possibly dispose of them in their turn. Indeed, whatever else may be better managed in France, our Academicians as well as their minor brethren may be truly thankful that they are dealt with by London and not Parisian critics.

This same curious objection to anything like detailed criticism is strangely remarkable in the comments dropped by one's fellow sightseers, but here it serves as a welcome relief. "Tiens! que c'est drôle!" "Ceci j'aime bien." "Cela ne me plaît pas." These and similar exclamations greet one at every turn, but it is all natural and naïve. There is none of that cheap second-hand criticism, that rage for serving a *réchauffée* of other men's opinions in some very home-made sauce, that distinguishes the middle-class patrons of our own Academy; and the difference is very appreciable to one who wishes to gaze in peace.

Perhaps the most noticeable feature of the exhibition is the increasing number of landscapes, and the new artistic departure they evince. The gaudy gardens with the stiff walks, the inevitable young couple under the Chinese umbrella, and the equally inevitable baby toddling in front, are rapidly becoming things of the past, and their place is being taken by the quiet, peaceful scenery, the sunlit glades and twilight pastures with which Englishmen are apt to associate the name of Leader. Segé and Zuber are perhaps the most thorough disciples of the new school, and both these artists, in common with several others, have given us some very beautiful landscapes. But if, by reason of this new departure, the latest Salon has lost a little of its decisive individuality of other years, in a still more pronounced direction it retains all its former prestige; in other words, it affords as many opportunities as ever for studying the human form divine.

English art is but little represented. Whistler has a couple of portraits, one of them, that of Lady Archibald Campbell, received more admiration while at the Grosvenor than it seems likely to obtain from the Parisians. Mr. J. L. Stewart's excellent "Hunt Ball" is perhaps the foreign picture which attracts most attention, and several of the prominent dancers are said to be capital portraits. This same fashion of introducing likenesses into a painting instead of merely copying a photographer's pose, possesses alike the charm of novelty and the power of appealing to a larger circle of patrons. The portrait of Mdme. Trois Etoiles, seated in an armchair in ordinary dress, is only gratifying to her own immediate friends, but the same woman when introduced into a charming picture, be she peasant or queen, becomes an object of interest to the public at large. Indeed, so much has this custom spread of late years, that although in the catalogue appear long lists of portraits, in the galleries themselves but very few are

noticeable. What is noticeable, however, is the enormous size of many of the canvases. The ordinary-sized productions of Rubens dwindle to mere pigmies when compared to the vast space they cover, and were quantity a sign of quality, the exhibition of 1885 would exceed all others.

Of historical works there are but few, but before one of these few is seen the largest crowd of any collected in the Salon. It is a painting by Rochegrosse, entitled "La Jacquerie," and represents an interior. On the left are two long, richly-stained windows through which the mob is forcing its way; on the right is huddled a group of the frightened inhabitants of the mansion, women and children, whose looks of frantic, almost idiotic terror is strikingly contrasted by the grinning delight of the invaders, who are standing still for the moment in stupid astonishment at the scene before them. In front of her kinswomen, facing her assailants, stands the grand figure of the mistress of the house. Her face, by reason of a veil, is scarcely seen, but her whole attitude is indicative of the finest scorn and defiance. The men in front of her are armed with axes and jagged stones; one holds a pike, on which is fixed a man's head; by another a bleeding heart is borne aloft in triumph. But it is in the varying expression of the different faces that Rochegrosse has excelled. In the greedy eyes of one glitters the thought of coming plunder; on the face of another, blood-stained and brutish, murder is clearly written; a third has wrongs to avenge, and the concentrated hatred of oppressed generations breaks from his lips in a yell of fury. One and all these faces are the work of a master, and "La Jacquerie" stands a very good chance of the Grand Prix.

Of the eighteen hundred and fifty statues, of the water-colours, of the etchings, want of space forbids even a passing mention. Whatever might be the verdict given from the magic circle of the initiated few, it must be conceded that, from an outsider's point of view, this year's Salon is a success. It contains very few bad pictures; very many that are good; and several that will not be forgotten when their artists have passed to the great majority.

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The Pelham Amateur Dramatic Club gave a representation of Mr. J. Albery's comedy, "Two Roses," in aid of St. Andrew's Church, Stoke Newington, on Thursday, May 7. Miss Annie Woodzell and Miss Sheridan represented the Two Roses very charmingly, and Mrs. N. Defries and Miss Siefred did all they could with the parts of Mrs. Cups and Our Mrs. Jenkins. Mr. E. Burford Morrison gave a good impersonation of the part of Digby Grant, and Jack Wyatt had a very satisfactory exponent in Mr. A. H. Morrison. Mr. Meyler Dunn as Furnival, Mr. E. Paxon as Caleb Deecie, and Mr. F. W. Brightman as Our Mr. Jenkins all acted well. There was a small but good orchestra which helped to while away a very pleasant evening.

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Madame Puzzi's annual matinée d'invitation took place on May 11, and was well attended by the fashionable and musical world. "The Rival Beauties," an operetta in two acts, words by J. P. Wooler, music by Alberto Randegger, was given in lieu of a concert, and met with such approbation that it was literally encored, everything having to be repeated. The cast was as follows:—Sir Percy Ringwood, Mr. Ben Davies; he has a sweet and pleas-

ing tenor voice, but would do well to avoid a tendency to sing in his throat in the soft passages: his acting was good. The Miller was enacted by Mr. Alic Marsh, who then made his first appearance on the stage; and Tom Deloraine by Signor Novara, who was in excellent voice and well suited in his part. Lady Edith Carleton was acted by Miss Marion Burton, of Carl Rosa's company: this young contralto has a sympathetic rich voice, and sings with much taste; she will certainly make her mark, if she will work, and acquire those finishing touches which are indispensable to every artist. The Alice Lynn of Mdlle. Ida Corani was full of spirit and brightness. Would that she had been content with the hearty calls she and the other artists received at the end of each act, without taking one in the middle of a scene; this deplorable habit is spreading, I fear. The composer, who was conducting, had to appear on the stage in answer to the repeated calls. The music of "The Rival Beauties" is not exactly new or original, but it is very pretty and bright. The orchestra (two pianos) was in the hands of the Cavaliere Bevignani, the talented director of the Royal Italian Opera, and that excellent musician and best of accompanists, Signor Bisaccia. I have seldom seen St. George's Hall more crowded, and Madame Puzzi must have been fully satisfied with the success of her matinée.

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Dion Boncicault's drama, "The Colleen Bawn," was given at St. George's Hall, on May 19, by amateurs, but it is not exactly the place to select for the representation of a play which depends for much of its success on perfect staging and beautiful scenery. For St. George's Hall the scenery was fair, except one back cloth representing trees, which is perfectly disgraceful. J. G. Meade struggled bravely to do the best he could for the part of Hardress Cregan. Some time back I told Mr. J. W. Hawkesworth that lovers were quite out of his line, but he evidently thinks he knows best, and therefore appeared as Kyrle Daly. The Danny Mann of Mr. Stafford was a very fair performance; the Corrigan of Mr. La Lerre excellent. Mr. O'Finigan was very good as Father Tom. Mr. Blake, I beg his pardon, Mr. Carrick, for he has changed his first *nom de théatre* for this new appellation, was the Myles-na-Coppaleen. Mr. Carrick made the most of his opportunities; his rendering of the character was natural, humorous, and finished. Mrs. Lennox Browne was efficient as Mrs. Cregan, and Miss Margaret Brandon was quite at home in her part, but she was an unsympathetic Anne Chute, showing little real feeling. Miss Edith Gellibrand was the sweetest Colleen Bawn one could have imagined. It is no merit that she is so pretty, but her manner and her acting match her face. One of the best impersonations of the evening was the Sheelah of a remarkably clever and promising young actress, Miss Dulcie Douglas, whose rendering of the old Irishwoman was admirable, and deserves unqualified praise. The hall was crammed with a very brilliant audience, almost every well-known London amateur being present in the capacity of spectator.

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Miss Minnie Bell gave a musical and dramatic matinée at Steinway Hall, on May 19. The stage was tastefully arranged with screens, draperies, flowers, &c., so as to represent a drawing-room. Miss Bell was heard to most advantage in "The Volunteer's Wife," by Denison. This was as perfect in its style as one could wish, and the brogue was so judiciously assumed as to enhance the pathos of the little scene, without raising laughter. And "Minnehaha," a selection from Longfellow's "Hiawatha," was given with much power and light and shade. I regret that the imperative necessity of being present at another and later performance prevented my staying to the very end, so I missed "In the Court-House." Miss Kate Wallace, a pupil of Miss Bell, is no better than the average amateur. The musical element was represented by Miss Agnes Leighton, an amateur; Mr. C. Hayden Coffin, who was in excellent voice; Miss Eleanor Ree, whose voice is powerful, though rather hard, but the lady pleased her audience; Madame Hirelmann, who would do well to leave florid music alone; Mr. Franklin Clive, whose fine voice is always effective; and Mr. Isidore de Lara, who met with his usual success. Mr. de Lara has much improved in his singing, and I must congratulate him on having gained a simplicity of manner which was not always his.

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A provincial correspondent writes:—"Mr. F. R. Benson and his dramatic company recently paid a six-nights' visit to Reading. The pieces played were 'Macbeth' and 'Hamlet,' the latter only once. This is Mr. Benson's most praiseworthy effort. In 'Macbeth' a surprise was in store for the good playgoing folk of Reading in the appearance of Miss Janet Achurch as Lady Macbeth. This young actress gave a novel presentment of the character. She was youthful, with golden locks and a cajoling manner; but beneath this fascinating exterior she thoroughly expressed the relentless ambition and soul-subduing power that we are wont to associate with the part. This was exemplified strongly in the banqueting scene, where the effects were most artistically obtained by unforced and well-measured emphasis, and by sober and significant gesture. Of course, such parts as Ophelia and Desdemona are more appropriate to so young an exponent; but an actress who, so early in her career, can reveal a character so vividly and faithfully should some day make her mark as an emotional artist on the London stage."

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Madame de Fonblanque and Mr. Gilbert Campbell's annual morning concert, which was given, by kind permission of Mrs. Morell-Mackenzie, at 19, Harley Street, came off on May 19. Madame de Fonblanque, looking pretty and bright as usual, delighted her audience by her charming singing; she was in first-rate voice, and so was Mr. Gilbert Campbell. Both are conscientious artists, who do not merely depend on their voices, but well understand that study and work are indispensable in art. Miss Damian, who took part in the concert, ought to follow this good example; it is a pity to find such a fine voice as hers wanting in finish. Miss Mary Davies and Miss Helen D'Alton were the other ladies, and Mr. Joseph Maas, Mr.

Bernard Lane, and Mr. Frederick King represented the sterner sex. All rendered good service. Some new pieces were brought out on this occasion: a song by Tosti, "It Came with the Merry May, Love," and one by Romili, "An Angel's Wing," both sung by Mr. Joseph Maas; a song by Mr. Gilbert Campbell, "I Dream of Thee by Night, Love," sung by the composer with much effect; and a very pleasing duet by A. Cunio, "La Riconciliazione," interpreted by Madame de Fonblanque and Mr. Gilbert Campbell. Mr. George Grossmith was very amusing in one of his clever sketches; and the concert was closed by "Ecco quel fiero istante," a quartet by Costa, remarkable for its ensemble, and in which Madame de Fonblanque, Miss Damian, Mr. Bernard Lane, and Mr. Gilbert Campbell took part. The conductors were:—Chev. Wilhelm Ganz, Signor Romili, and Miss Bessie Waugh. The attendance was great; not only the rooms but the stairs were crowded, and the audience was warmly appreciative.

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Peg Fryer.—This extraordinary woman, an actress in the reign of Charles II., after a long absence, returned to the stage in George I.'s reign, appeared in the "Half-pay Officer," a tragic comedy, founded on Sir William Davenant's "Love and Humour." Peg Fryer reappeared in her original character, "Lady Ricklow." She was announced in the bills of Lincoln's Inn Fields' Theatre thus: "'Lady Ricklow' by the famous Peg Fryer; her first appearance these fifty years; and who will dance a jig at the end of the farce, 1720." At eighty-five years of age this remarkable woman sustained her part with great spirit, and was received with thunders of applause; but, when she came to dance, she appeared to be exhausted by her exertions, made her obeisance to the audience and retired. The orchestra struck up an Irish trot—the old lady rushed on the stage again, and danced her promised jig to the surprise and delight of the spectators. She kept a tavern and ordinary at Tottenham Court. Her house was always thronged with company, who went out of curiosity to see and to talk to this wonderful old woman!

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